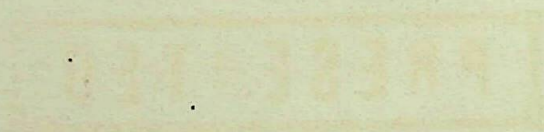


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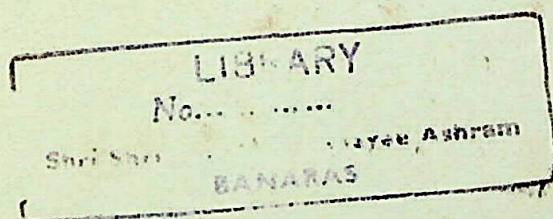
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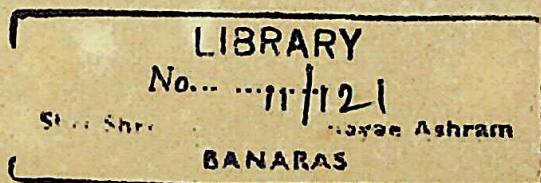






HUBERTUS PRINCE ZU LÖWENSTEIN

A BASIC  
HISTORY OF GERMANY



PUBLISHED BY INTER NATIONES · BONN



*A Gift from Mr. H. Rentrop,  
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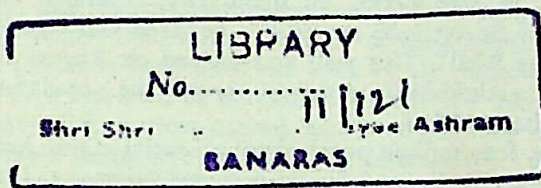
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## PREFACE

Whereas in 1945 the end of Germany seemed at hand, at least as an independent nation, that country has reemerged today as a factor in international affairs. Her destroyed cities have been rebuilt, homes were provided for millions of destitute expellees and political refugees who poured into the devastated West from the eastern provinces, a stable economy supported by a hard currency has taken the place of the economic chaos of the first post war years. German schools and universities have once again become respected centers of education and a meeting place for the youth of many nations.

After four years of military government by the victorious Western Powers the Federal Republic of Germany was constituted in 1949. This Republic established itself on the basis of free elections, and it adopted a democratic system of government firmly rooted in the consent of the governed, with social justice for all. Its territory is at present limited to what used to be the three Western zones of occupation, with a population of over fifty seven million. But, due to its democratic legitimation, the Federal Republic is internationally recognized as the spokesman also of the seventeen million Germans now living in the Soviet zone of occupation who are still deprived of the right of national und political self-determination.

The Western sectors of Germany's capital, Berlin, are also enjoying today full democratic freedom. Desperate and in ruins in 1945, West Berlin has developed into the greatest industrial city of Germany and one of the most important in all Europe as well. It is a city of free men and women, who enjoy the fruits of their peaceful labor, protected by social legislation and Western troupes.

However, just as German freedom and recovery end abruptly at the Iron Curtain, which cuts off the Soviet Zone of occupation from the



Federal Republic, so Free Berlin, an island city, separated from the West by a strip of Soviet held territory a hundred and twenty miles wide, ends at "The Wall". This wall was erected on August 13, 1961 by the communist authorities in order to prevent the population from seeking refuge in the free West.

Up to that date, four million people from all social classes and walks of life had fled East Berlin and Soviet occupied Germany. Over half of them were young people below the age of twenty five.

Even since the Berlin prison wall went up people have still tried to escape. Some were successful, many others died from the bullets of the communist guards or were left bleeding to death in the barbed wire fences on the eastern side of the Wall.

Thus, notable as the achievements of the German people in the Federal Republic and in West Berlin certainly are, the fact remains that the fate of Germany as a whole is wrought with tragedy. The country is divided between freedom and oppression, and the threat to the free part remains as serious as it has been for years.

The Federal Republic forms today an integral part of the European Community and of the wider Atlantic-European system of mutual defence. The spirit of international cooperation has triumphed over what ever remnants of nationalistic dotrines might have been left behind by the defunct Hitler regime.

Unfortunately, the misdeeds of the National Socialists — a minority rule, that kept Germany in bondage for twelve years — are still in many parts of the world obscuring the view for the true role the Germans have played in history. Without such historic insight, however, it is not possible to understand either the position or the character of peoples in our world of today.

An objective evaluation of German history shows that it was inspired not by domination but rather by service toward the supranational, occidental community of nations. The German word "Reich", often used to describe this community, means "Commonwealth" rather than "Empire" with all its modern connotations of "imperialism".

Such an objective evaluation will also bring out that from early times there existed a notable affinity between the German mind inclining to metaphysical, philosophical or religious speculation, and corresponding attitudes in many Asiatic nations. Also, Germany's fate was always closely intertwined with that of the other peoples in Europe as well as with the nations in Western Asia, the Near and Middle East, and Africa.



Today, this mutual interdependence has become even stronger. Geographical delineations have lost much of their meaning. The people of divided Germany have close ties with all the nations who are striving to gain their freedom, or to defend it. On the other hand, security and liberty of the various nations, wherever they may live, are dependent on the same democratic principles of civic liberties and national self-determination for which the German people are striving.

Thus, the present book, which is now published for the first time in English, would seem to serve a double purpose: to acquaint other nations with the basic facts of German history as a part of the history of occidental mankind, and to demonstrate that in our modern world freedom is supranational and indivisible.

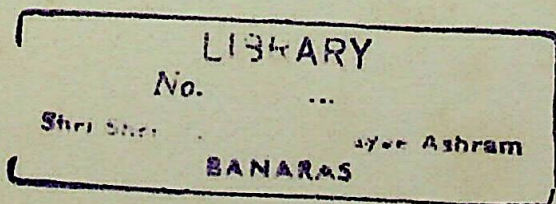
May I be permitted to add a personal remark. In the last few years I have had the opportunity of travelling all over the globe and getting acquainted with many different peoples of various religions, philosophies of life, languages or race. Everywhere I found hospitality, and I was privileged to establish lasting friendships. I may say, therefore, that the "Fatherland of Mankind" emerged before my eyes as a tangible reality.

For this experience I am deeply grateful, and I should like to express my thanks also in the name of my divided and suffering country. What I have received from these nations, many of them geographically remote from Germany, has continued to be a source of joy and moral encouragement.

I should be happy if this little book were accepted as a modest contribution toward better international understanding, if it were taken as significant for the spirit of a nation which, while it has gone through fateful errors in the more recent past, is today earnestly striving to offer its spiritual and historic heritage to the family of man, in the service of a supranational commonwealth of the free.

Bad Godesberg on the Rhine,  
New Year 1964

Hubertus Friedrich zu Löwenstein







11121

## I

## ORIGIN OF THE EMPIRE

As the Roman Empire extended its dominion over the ancient world, it came into contact with the Germanic tribes which, populous and in manifold variety, were congregated in the broad regions stretching from the Rhine and the Alps to the great rivers of present-day Russia, and in the North to Scandinavia. The first reliable information about them comes to us from Julius Caesar who with his legions' eagles carried the idea of a world-wide empire, a supranational commonwealth, beyond the Rhine. The name of this man who in 58 B. C. vanquished the Suevian king Ariovistus has remained linked with the history of Germany for two thousand years.

The German word for emperor, "Kaiser" — the highest office in the occidental world — is derived from Caesar's name. Also the Russian imperial title "Tsar", the Iranian "Shah" and the corresponding term "Kaisar" in India are going back to the same root.

It was this greatest man of antiquity who led the Germanic peoples into conscious history: by defeating them, and by then accepting them into his armies. The world historic battle at Pharsalus against Pompey in 48 B. C., which gave Caesar dominion over the Roman Empire, was won with the aid of Germanic auxiliaries.

It was Caesar who pointed out to the vanquished the new road they should follow, not against the Empire, but within it — until, centuries later, they did mature to be capable of taking over the Empire themselves; and it was Caesar who first taught them to seek their place, when they would finally emerge as a nation, in a community above the nations, including their own.



Thus it is not merely accidental that the first appearance of the name *Deutsche* (Germans) as a designation for those Germanic tribes who were to form the German nation coincides almost exactly with the birth of the universal Roman Empire of the German Nation. From the very beginning of German history the famous word has applied that "it is un-German to be nothing but German".

Like Latinity, the concept of *Deutschtum*, or Germanity, cannot be defined in terms of blood or race. Germanic, Celtic, Romance, Slavonic, but also Semitic and Asian elements have contributed to mould the German national body. "Germany" indicates a community of historic destiny, of language, culture, legal customs and of a voluntary union with a common task. Such were the forces — not racial purity — that shaped the German nation and gradually distinguished it from the other peoples of Germanic origin.

Any review of history that were to deny or disregard the spiritual forces superior to man, namely a divine plan moving mankind forward, despite all errors and retrogressions, toward morality chosen in freedom — would ultimately have to be satisfied with an enumeration of dates and events. In our agnostic age, much that makes its appearance with a claim to being historiography is, in fact, merely a compilation of such disconnected or superficially correlated facts, without deeper significance.

German history in particular cannot be told in a meaningful manner if the decisive force is ignored by which it was shaped — Christianity. Here the idea of a universal commonwealth which is so important for the course of German history found spiritual expression. In fact, one is justified in placing the beginning of "German" history proper in the period from Charlemagne to Otto the Great. Not until Charlemagne was crowned emperor in the year 800 and Otto in 962 established the Empire on Roman-Christian foundations, were the Germanic tribes (which by then had become the German nation) entrusted with a leading role in the Occidental community. Nearly a thousand years of preparation preceded this emergence of the Germans as a nation and an empire.

The light-minded advance of a Roman military commander, P. Quinctilius Varus, who had just been transferred to Germany from Syria, wrote world history. In the battle in the Teutoburg Forest in 9 A. D. the followers of Hermann, a Cheruscan chieftain trained in the Roman army, destroyed the Legions XVII, XVIII and XIX. So painfully was this defeat felt even by later generations that these numbers were never again used by Roman legions, although, in strategic importance it



ranked far less than many others suffered and successfully overcome by the Roman Empire. The defeat even prompted Emperor Augustus to the decision that the Empire should be bounded by the Rhine rather than the Elbe river, and this was not reversed by the victorious campaigns of Germanicus, nephew and adopted son of Emperor Tiberius, in 14—16 A. D. who recovered the Legions' lost eagles. Only some forward strong-points and trading-posts remained at the Elbe river.

As Tacitus wrote a hundred years later in his *Germania*, the name of Hermann — "truly Germany's liberator" — remained alive in the minds of the Germanic peoples.

While Germany west of the Rhine and south of the Danube was brought under Roman civilization, the Germanic infiltration of the Roman Empire — especially in the border provinces, in the army and administration — continued unabated, in spite of the Teutoburg battle. During the centuries that followed, Germanic tribes and leaders fought time after time on both sides. The Great Migration, the beginning of which, somewhat arbitrarily, is dated at 375 A. D. would have had much more devastating effects had not the German tribes inside the Empire long before espoused the cause of Rome and its supra-national civilization.

The declining Roman Empire — the idea of which, it is true, could never again perish since even in the minds of its opponents it had become identified with the idea of civilized mankind — was saved from extinction by its Germanic conquerors. Odoaker, of whom the school books say that he brought about its "collapse" in 476, preserved Roman customs and Roman law and exercised his authority in the name of the East Roman Emperor. His desire was not to break up the one, all-embracing community but to preserve it.

The same applies to his successor who defeated him, the Gothic King Theodoric the Great (489 to 526), a man of truly historic stature. Theodoric's empire embraced not only Italy proper but also the Provence in Southern France, present-day Yugoslavia, Hungary west of the Danube and the alpine region of Austria. Up to his death he exercised authority in the Franco-Spanish kingdom of the Visigoths as guardian and regent for his grandson Amalaric. Through ties of blood Theodoric was also connected with the rising Frankish empire of Clovis and with the kings of the Burgundians, Vandals and Thuringians. He can rightly be regarded as a precursor of Charlemagne. In the thirty-three years of his reign, from the conquest of Ravenna (493) to his death, he brought, in a great synthesis of Roman and Germanic civili-



zation, new life to many provinces that had been laid waste, and even to Rome, the capital, which for centuries had been abandoned by the Caesars. His historian, Procopius, voiced the opinion of his grateful peoples when he called him "truly an Emperor" although, as Odoaker before him, he had refused for himself the insignia of imperial dignity, and had in word and deed — as by the annual naming of two consuls, one from the East and the other from the West — acknowledged the continued existence of the Empire.

Myths and legends which the peoples weave around historical figures often reflect a truthful image. Because he fulfilled the general longing for a powerful empire, of peace and justice, Theodoric — the "Dietrich of Bern" of the *Nibelungenlied* — like Charlemagne and the Hohenstaufen emperors Barbarossa and Frederick II, has remained alive in the memory of the peoples down to our present day.

The noble kingdom of the Goths met its downfall in the battle at the Vesuvius (553). The Franks, a confederation formed in 210 by free tribes living between the Weser river and the Lower Rhine, were next to be called upon by history to preserve and restore the idea of the Roman Empire. Clovis, a Germanic tribal king (481 to 511) of the Merovingian dynasty, embraced Christianity in its Catholic form in 490, as distinct from a heretic version practised by other Germanic tribes. This latter was called "Arianism" after its founder, Bishop Arius of Alexandria in the fourth century. At his coronation at Rheims Clovis was anointed with oil from the "Holy Ampulla" which was brought, it is said, by a dove from heaven and which afterwards served for anointing every king of France, until the French Revolution.

Clovis enjoyed the support of the papacy and the bishops which later was so essential for the founding of Charlemagne's empire. After his victories over the last West Roman governor Syagrius (486, near Soissons) as well as the Burgundians, Alemanni and Visigoths his control extended north of the Pyrenees over present-day France and a broad strip east of the Rhine. Although his power was not dependent on the East Roman emperor he, too, acknowledged the continued existence of the Empire. Twenty-five years after Clovis died, the East Roman Emperor Justinian expressly confirmed the legality of the Frankish possessions north of the Alps.

The State founded by Clovis, frequently divided and reunited, finally comprised France, Switzerland, Belgium, the greater part of Holland, the Rhineland and nearly all of South and Central Germany. A legal system which had developed in the fifth century out of Germanic usage



and customs under Roman influence gave the wide kingdom internal strength. Out of a provision in the *Lex Salica* (the most ancient Germanic body of laws) precluding women from acquiring landed property, there developed the so-called "Salic Law" to the effect that only male descendents could succeed to German thrones. This proved of great political importance, down even to modern times. When William IV, who was both King of England and of the German Kingdom of Hanover, died in 1837, his niece, Queen Victoria who succeeded him in England could not inherit the Hanoverian throne as well. It passed to a male member of the Royal House of Hanover, bringing to an end the personal union which had existed between the two kingdoms since 1714.

The Frankish kingdom was also the period of the birth of the system of "feudalism". Originally a relationship of mutual rights and obligations, with free men tilling the soil and enjoying the protection of a feudal lord, it was only much later that this was turned into an overlordship over vassals.

This kingdom proved strong enough to fulfill the historic mission that time and again has been thrust upon the peoples of Europe: to ward off wave after wave of powerful aggressors coming from the outside of the Occidental community.

In 711, scarcely eighty years after the death of Mohammed, the Islamic Arabs, filled with religious fervor, reached Spain and in just under four years they overran the major part of the kingdom of the Visigoths. They crossed the Pyrenees, and presently the Crescent was reflected in the Loire, a thousand miles from Gibraltar. Only the Frankish kingdom stood between them and the conquest of the Christian world.

This time the situation was saved by Charles Martell, mayor of the royal household under the last weak Merovingian king and father of Pipin the Short, the first king of the Carolingian house. His political power derived additional strength from the grandiose organisation of the Roman church accomplished by St. Boniface, the "apostle of the Germans". Of British origin, St. Boniface ranks high among the statesmen of the Middle Ages.

The battle of Tours and Poitiers (732), at which Charles Martell defeated the Saracens, is an event deserving to rank with the victory over the Huns at the Catalaunian Fields (451), over the Avars (796), the Hungarians (955), the Mongols (1241) with the naval battle of Lepanto (1571) and the raising of the siege of Vienna (1683).

For the first time since hundreds of years, European peoples at Tours and Poitiers united to act as one fold under a common leader. As a



result of the victory, their faith was strengthened in their common heritage and a common goal, and with this there matured the second mission devolving on the Frankish kingdom, namely to realize once again the unity of Europe as a community of free nations joined together by faith, history and law.

Pipin, the son of the victor of Tours and Poitiers and the first Frankish ruler to declare himself king "by the grace of God", crossed into Italy where he vanquished the Lombards, took Ravenna and laid the foundation of the *Patrimonium Petri*, the Papal State. Thus, as in Roman times, a bridge was built once again between the cisalpine and the transalpine worlds, an alliance was concluded between the Occident's mightiest temporal ruler and the papacy, the supreme ecclesiastical power.

It was on this foundation that Charlemagne (768 to 814), son of Pipin and heir of the Frankish political and spiritual power, was able to restore the Empire and to carry its frontiers deep into the heart of the Germanic world, where it had never been secured by the legions of Rome for permanent possession.

## II

### THE CROWN OF CHARLEMAGNE

Charlemagne united under his rule the Franks, Bavarians, Saxons, Lombards, and what remained of the ethnical Romans in Italy. At the same time, his work emulates the power and the splendour of the ancient Roman Empire, now transformed into a European commonwealth.

There was no national distinction or frontier then between the countries today called France and Germany. Since the borders of Charlemagne's realm, like those of free Europe today, were reaching merely to the Elbe river; and as, moreover, friendship between the French and German peoples, after centuries of division and bloodshed, was restored in our day, this has given rise to calling the present division of the Continent a "Carolingian concept" implying that "Europe", with France and Germany as its major components, should be limited to its western parts.

However, Charlemagne's empire cannot be a political goal today. Neither was it due to any preconceived plan that he did not carry the borders of Europe further to the east, such as, Augustus, for example,



had limited the empire to the Rhine frontier, after the Teutoburg defeat.

Charlemagne conceived his rulership as an obligation toward the community of all nations, without geographical limitation. In this he was strongly influenced by the writings of St. Augustine, the great theologian and philosopher of history (354—430). In his principal work "The City of God" St. Augustine had dealt with the moral duties of just rulers towards the "City of Man", namely, to establish universal peace on earth. Any limitation to a defined territory would have been contrary not only to Charlemagne's political concept, but also to his religious convictions.

The subjugation of the pagan Saxons in thirty-two years of embittered warfare was missionary work no less than political conquest. After his victories, Charlemagne established new sees which still flourish today, including Osnabrueck (783), Muenster (791) and Paderborn (795). In 787 Bremen at the mouth of the Weser river became bishopric. It was from there that the Christianization of northern Europe got under way. Charlemagne also occupied "Nordalbia", a district on the right bank of the Elbe river. The Empire thereby reached the Baltic Sea for the first time. A campaign against the Vilzi Slavs who lived between the Oder and the Elbe rivers indicated plans of even wider scope.

The integration of the Saxons into the Frankish-Roman world was of great importance. But for Charlemagne's victories, the Saxons, who had close bloodties with the early conquerors of Britain, might have developed into a bridgehead for the seafaring Anglo-Saxons and an ally for the Danes who at that time were still pagan. There was a danger that two empires might emerge, splitting the occidental world into two hostile camps.

As in the north, Charlemagne also in Southern Germany saw to it that the central power was strengthened by the incorporation of the Bavarian tribal duchy. Duke Tassilo was deposed in 788. Ten years later, Charlemagne established an archbishopric at Salzburg, as the metropolitan see for the ecclesiastical province of Bavaria.

In 791, two army groups setting out from Regensburg and Northern Italy marched under Charlemagne against the invading Avars, a nomad people of uncertain origin. This was the first campaign in which all German tribes took part under one unified command. The war, with intermissions, lasted for thirty years, until the Avars vanished again from the European theatre never to return, as the Huns and other eastern invaders did before and after them.



Thus the frontiers of the Carolingian empire were extended also towards the south-east, beyond the river Enns and up to the gates of the old Roman legionary city of Vindobona, the Vienna of today. With this step, the Frankish-Roman empire reached the sphere of influence of East Rome. The contest was aggravated by the fact that Venice and Dalmatia, which belonged to the East Roman empire, paid homage to Charlemagne.

The birth of a new, legitimate central power in the West and a decisive step towards independence from Byzantium, or East Rome, took place when Charlemagne was crowned emperor by Pope Leo III on Christmas Day 800, in St. Peter's in Rome.

The Western part of the Occident had become strong enough to assert its claim that it was here that the universal Roman Empire had first been born. Only as long as the West lacked a central authority had Byzantium, the "Second Rome" been permitted to act as trustee for the Western part of the Empire as well.

Charlemagne's imperial coronation by the Pope did not mean that the Empire was "founded" by the papacy. The Empire was already in existence. It meant only that the supreme representative of the Empire received consecration from the successor of St. Peter, whereby the church recognized the legitimacy of the imperial power.

The two powers, sustaining each other, at times locked in bitter contest, nevertheless always recognized that they were institutions created by a higher order. Each was entrusted with special tasks which it alone was able to perform. The duty of the temporal power was to guide men in the discharge of their earthly tasks, the duty of the spiritual power to guide them to eternal salvation. On the harmonious cooperation of the two rested the well-being of the Empire.

Thus Europe took a course that was, spiritually and politically, freer than in the East. There, in Byzantium, later on in Moscow, church and state were welded into one single unit, with religion becoming part of life political, and politics guiding the affairs of the church.

Charles farsighted policy inspired by a genuine missionary urge did finally, in 805 and 806, reach out to Bohemia, the heartland of Central Europe. Making it tributary to the Empire was but a first step toward embodying it into the cultural orbit of Europe, where later on it was to play a most important role. The founding of the Spanish March in 795 and the capture of Barcelona in 801 was the beginning of the reconquest of Spain, completed seven centuries later with the fall of Granada, the last Moorish stronghold, in 1492. How closely interwoven are



the major events in history! It was this victory which, within the same year 1492, freed the hands of Queen Isabella of Castille to set Christopher Columbus on his daring westward voyage, hoping to discover the sea lanes to India. It was America that he discovered instead, and thereby the face of our world was changed.

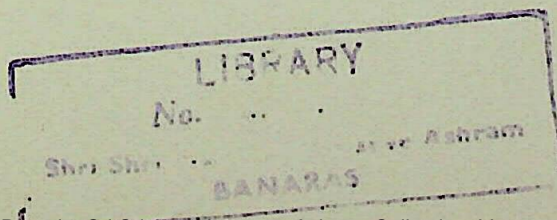
The original unity of the Carolingian Empire was split up by the descendants of Charlemagne when they partitioned it by the treaties of Verdun (843), Mersen (870), and Ribémont (880).

Much as this split may be regretted, there is no point in arguing with history. The course of history carries in itself its own justification, even though man with his limited field of vision may at first fail to grasp the wisdom of historic verdicts. In the present instance the centrifugal trend led to important consequences. In Western Europe there developed the French nation, a blending of romanized Celts and Germanic Franks, while in the eastern part the German nation as a community of its own began to emerge. In the south, the partitioning gave rise to the Italian nation, again a blending of various ethnical elements — Roman, Germanic (Lombards, Vandals, Franks), Greek and, in the south even Arab.

All these nations emerged from the heritage left by the Carolingian dynasty. Lothar, emperor and king of Italy (after whom Lothringen, in French "Lorraine", has been named), eldest son of Charlemagne's heir Louis the Pious, may be called the father of modern Italy, just as King Louis surnamed "the German" — he too a son of Louis the Pious — is the father of the German nation, while Charles the Bald, Louis' youngest son, as king of the Western part of Charlemagne's empire became the father of the French nation.

All three parts of the Empire benefited from a cultural revival, the "Carolingian Renaissance" which, after centuries of decline, owed much to the initiative of the emperor. With the assistance of great scholars like Alcuin (an Anglo-Saxon) and the abbot Hrabanus Maurus (later called *praeceptor Germaniae*), Charlemagne established schools for elementary and higher education, thereby laying the foundation to Europe's educational system. The curriculum included history, grammar, the classical languages, philosophy, even orthography. The Carolingian style of architecture to which the cathedral at Aachen (in French Aix-la-Chapelle) gave a classical expression, stands midway between recreated Roman architectural forms and the Romanesque style.

Nor did the original unity of the Carolingian Empire vanish entirely after it was dismembered. There always remained basic ties which re-





vealed themselves again and again during the course of history. Also, the founder's name has continued to live in the memory of his peoples to this very day and the Crown named after him has become Europe's most sublime diadem. It was even raised to the stars, as a constellation named *Corona Caroli Magni*. The word *kral* used by the Slavs for "king" derives from "Karl" or Charles.

True, when the German branch of the Carolingians became extinct in 911 with Louis the Child, the German nobles were not longer willing to offer the crown to the West Frankish, or French, Carolingians who flourished till 987. Instead, they chose as their king another man of Frankish extraction — Conrad, the first king of Germany (911—918). In 919, the East Frankish empire was named *Regnum Teutonicorum* for the first time (Realm, or Empire, of the Germans).

With the decline of the strong central power of the Carolingians, new tribal dukedoms came to the fore in Germany — in Suevia, Bavaria, Saxony, Franconia. Smaller territorial units followed with regional princes of their own. While this split up Germany territorially, it also preserved the country from the danger of a sterilizing centralism. Over the centuries, a large number of cultural centers developed, each with a high degree of spiritual autonomy. This has remained important down to the present. Germany, after 1945, could emerge so quickly from the ruins, develop new democratic life, start anew the schools, universities, the theatres and concert halls, because neither cultural nor political life were wholly centralized but rather spreading out over many autonomous *Länder* and flourishing even in the small towns, many of them untouched by the war.

On the other hand, German regionalism resulted in the rise of numerous communities — later called "states" — which boasted of their independence and were opposed to the growth of a strong power responsible to the whole. Here lies one of the seeds for the disintegration and finally the downfall of the Empire, whose members all too often set themselves up against the Emperor, sometimes even in league with foreign powers.

It is a rare event in German history when the tribes, or later the princes, subordinated themselves voluntarily to the elected kings without trying to restrict the royal power in order to increase their own. A threat from the outside was often needed to restore internal unity. In the tenth century this happened with the invasion of the Magyars, or Hungarians, who in 907 inflicted a crushing defeat on Margrave Luitpold of Austria, ancestor of the Wittelsbach House.



The noble-minded last Frankish king, Conrad I on his deathbed designated as his successor Henry, Duke of the Saxons, the ruler of the tribe which only such a short time before had been won over to the Empire. His suggestion was unanimously approved by the Frankish and Saxon nobles convening at Fritzlar in 919.

With Henry I, called "the Fowler" (919—936), the line of German kings of the House of Saxony was initiated. Under their rule there came into being the Roman Empire of the Germans, which was to last until 1806.

### III

#### THE SAXON EMPERORS

With wisdom and energy Henry I asserted himself at two fronts of history. In 933 he defeated the Magyars in the battle at the Unstrut river destroying thereby the reputation of their invincibility. To protect the country he built castles and fortified places, many of which later became towns, among them Naumburg, now famous for its Gothic cathedral and statues, as well as Merseburg and Quedlinburg.

In continuation of the policy of Charlemagne, this defensive victory was followed by the opening-up of land inhabited by pagan Slavs between the Elbe and the Havel rivers. Once inhabited by the Germanic Suevian tribes, this part of the country was overrun by the Slavs during the Great Migration. Since the fortified place of "Branibor" had become a stronghold of the Vilzi, allied to the Magyars, King Henry in the winter of 928 crossed the frozen Havel river and stormed Branibor — which later became Brandenburg and still is a flourishing town within the province of the same name, surrounding the City of Berlin.

To protect the country Henry established a royal stronghold at Meissen on the banks of the Elbe river. Only twenty years later it was possible to establish a bishopric at Havelberg, from where the people's conversion to Christianity was started. Thus Henry can be said to be the founder of the province of Brandenburg, the central region of the later kingdom of Prussia. He also quelled an uprising of the Vilzi. In 932 and 934, the Lusizi (in the later march of Lausitz) and the Ugrians (in the later Uckermark) became subject to the German crown. For the first time the frontiers of the Empire reached the Oder river.

In 929 King Henry went to Prague, where he received homage from the Christian duke Wenceslas of the Przemyslid house. This was the



first legal bond between Bohemia and the Empire. Wenceslas is the patron saint of Bohemia; the "Crown of St. Wenceslas" is the ageless symbol of Bohemia's historic greatness. Through Emperor Frederick Barbarossa the dukes became hereditary kings, and by the *Golden Bull* of 1356 they were made electors and holders of the office of "archcup-bearer".

In 935 Henry I concluded an alliance with the Carolingian King Rudolf of France, as well as with King Rudolf II of Burgundy of the Welf house. From the Burgundians he acquired the Holy Lance, which he prized so highly that he traded the town of Basle for it. This "Lance of St. Mauritius" became Germany's royal spear by which, when handed to the elected successor, power over the Empire was transferred. From Burgundy came also the Roman-German imperial crown. Its origins go back to the ninth century. Originally it may have been the royal crown of Burgundy. It became the imperial crown under the Salian Conrad II who reunited Burgundy to the Empire.

At this point a digression may be in order. The question arises whether history is really determined so extensively by the actions of rulers. Are not the other estates of equal importance? And must one not allow wide influence also to the social, economic and cultural forces?

History, in our view, represents man's evolution toward freedom. Those who serve this process best because they are most consciously aware of the specific historic mission of their epoch will be the leaders. The activity of such men or social groups will be a moving force of historic progress. In the Middle Ages, it was the emperors upon whom devolved the task to defend freedom against all threats from outside, and to protect justice and peace within. Later, princes and cities shared in this duty. In the sixteenth century the knights and peasants had to perform an historic mission in defense of liberty, in the nineteenth it was the turn of the middle classes, the "bourgeoisie", and after them the workers moved into their own. In our own age, the people as a whole are taking part in promoting historic progress.

The Empire was founded on the realization that freedom is not a privilege of one man (as in the ancient kingdoms), nor of a few (as in the Greek city republics), but that all are free, as children of the same Father. From the lowest to the most exalted of its members, all were bound together by mutual rights and mutual obligations. Every person in the earthly community — which was understood as a reflection of the Divine World — had a clearly defined and assured position in relation to those above or under him. Even the highest in the order, the Emperor,



was bound by a twofold duty: towards the people, and towards God and the moral law. The basic layer of the social pyramid was formed by the peasants, the serfs, and the rural population. The pyramid itself rested on the firm foundation of the soil which, according to natural law, is the common property of all mankind and must serve the needs of all.

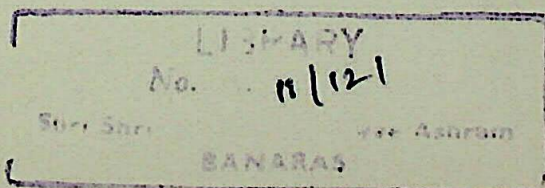
Supreme protector of the land and the people was the ruler whose office emanated from a democratic source — the Roman tribunate of the people. As heirs to this office which had been held also by Caesar, Augustus and their successors, the rulers were sacrosanct or inviolable, because they had to protect the weak against the mighty. Monarchy in this sense of the people's rule degenerated when it turned into absolutism or an oligarchy of landowners and the moneyed classes, as thereby it betrayed its original mission which is to safeguard the rights of the people.

Otto I (936—973) was anointed and crowned at Aachen by the Archbishop of Mainz and elevated to Charlemagne's throne. The four chief offices or *Erzämter* — later defined constitutionally in the Golden Bull of 1356 — were exercised by the Dukes of Franconia (Lord High Steward), Swabia (Cupbearer), Bavaria (Marshal) and Lorraine (Chamberlain).

On succeeding to the throne in 936, Otto resumed the work of his father — the historic mission of incorporating the East into the Empire. As a protection against the *Vilzi* and the *Sorbi* two marches were created — one on the lower Elbe river under Hermann Billung, the other in the south under the Margrave Gero. The whole region as far as the Oder river was now tributary to the Empire, without being actually incorporated yet.

Otto forcefully asserted the central royal authority against the rebellious dukes, including his own brother Henry, duke of Bavaria. He also ordered the troubled affairs of France, where he received homage. Finally dominion extended all the way from the Oder to the Meuse and the Scheldt. It included parts of Italy, since in 951 he received the Lombard crown. His marriage in the same year to Adelaide (Adelheid), widow of King Lothar of Provence and heiress to the Carolingian-Italian kingdom, restored the destiny-laden link between North and South. To the title "King of the Franks and Langobards" which he adopted at this time, he added "King of the Italians".

Otto's position became even more impressive when he defeated the Magyars. In 937 a new invasion by them had occurred, Southern Germany was laid waste, and the waves of the aggression swept forward





as far as France and Italy. But in 955 the German tribes joined by the Bohemians fighting under their common banner emblazoned with the figure of the Archangel Michael, defeated the Magyars on the Lech river near Augsburg. The defeat was followed by swift conversion. In 1001 the Magyar prince Waik, who was baptised under the name Stephen, married Gisela, daughter of Duke Henry of Bavaria of the House of Saxony. Waik was the first to bear the title of "Apostolic King", which later passed on to the Habsburgs.

It was part of the office of Christendom's most powerful prince to be protector of the Church. In 961 Otto I undertook a second expedition to Italy to restore the moral integrity of the papacy (the unedifying life of Pape John XII, who was only seventeen, had caused a scandal) and to ensure the independence of the Holy See from ambitious Italian nobles, such as the Margrave Berengar of Ivrea (who also bore the phantom title of "emperor"), the Frangipani, Orsini, Crescenzi, and others. On February 2, 962, at St. Peter's, Otto received the imperial crown. This was an event of lasting significance influencing as it did German history for centuries. On February 2, 1962 the millennial anniversary of the founding of the Empire was remembered by official ceremonies in Vienna and Rome. Although the imperial dignity was universal, not reserved to any particular nationality, as a rule the German kings were invested with it. Germany thereby assumed obligations which transcended its national confines, and this required continuously great sacrifices on the part of the German people. But it is precisely this supra-national position that gives German history distinction. Only under supranational symbols could the tribes and peoples of the East be won for European civilization and brought into the spiritual orbit of the occidental community.

Emperor Otto's contemporaries praised his untiring energy, his care for the well-being of all his peoples and his profound humanitarianism. It was part of his universal planning that he married his son — later Emperor Otto II — to the Byzantine princess Theophano, one of the greatest women in world history. She was the daughter of the East Roman emperor Romanos II of the Macedonian dynasty descending, according to tradition, from Alexander the Great. Their wedding took place in Rome, and on their return to Germany they were welcomed by princes temporal and ecclesiastical from all over Europe, among them the dukes of Bohemia and Poland, as well as envoys from Hungary, Bulgaria and even from the Caliph Moizz of Egypt.

Shortly afterwards the emperor, only sixty-one years of age, suc-



cumbed at Memleben, the city where also his father had died. He was buried in the cathedral of Magdeburg, which through his efforts had become a bishopric equal in rank with Constantinople. Twice Magdeburg was almost completely destroyed — in 1631, during the Thirty Years' War, and again by aerial bombardments in the Second World War. Yet, the great cathedral with the tomb of the Founder of the Empire did both times as if by a miracle escape destruction.

Otto's son and successor, Emperor Otto II (973—983), died at the age of twenty-nine. He is the only Roman-German emperor to be buried in Rome, in the vaults of St. Peter's. During his short reign, Otto II asserted the imperial authority powerfully. He forced Harold Bluetooth, king of Denmark, to recognize once more the overlordship of the Empire; he quelled the revolt of his cousin, Duke Henry the Quarrelsome; and he even brought the latter's Bohemian confederates to heel again. The founding of the Moravian Bishopric of Olmütz (in present day's Czechoslovakia) under the archdiocese of Mainz, was also his work. In 978 he repelled an attack by King Lothar of France.

Faithful to his obligations as protector of Christianity Otto, in 980, went to Italy to ward off an Arab invasion. Already had the Fatimites conquered Sicily from the Eastern Roman empire and were setting out for Italy across the Straits of Messina. The whole peninsula, even Rome, seemed in grave danger. After gaining a victory near Colonna, Otto was totally defeated at Cotrone in Calabria (982). The German historian Leopold von Ranke has likened this battle to that at Cannae in the ancient empire: the Carthaginians of former days had changed into African Saracens, the Romans into ironclad Germans; but the clash of world-historic interests between the two realms bordering the Mediterranean was the same.

At a diet at Verona, the Italian and German princes convening for the defence of the Empire elected as their future head the Emperor's three-year-old son, Otto. The child ascended the throne shortly afterwards when Otto II died of fever, exhausted prematurely by the strain of the office. Immediately revolts flared up among the Slavs. The Völzes stormed Havelberg and Brandenburg and crossed the Elbe river. They were defeated by the Saxons, but wide stretches of territory, among them the Northern March (out of which Mark Brandenburg later developed) were lost. The Danes and Franks also rose up in revolt. To secure guardianship over the young king — perhaps even his crown — Duke Henry of Bavaria of the Ottonian house was prepared to purchase aid from France by ceding Lorraine.



In this dark hour it was the genius of the empress, Theophano, that saved the empire. She it was, as the chroniclers say, who forcefully held the whole Empire together as if by a chain. In her castle at Quedlinburg she held a brilliant court, which radiated Greek splendor and Roman majesty under a northern sky, a centre of learning and of the fine arts. In the presence of her young son she presided over a magnificent diet at Nijmwegen, attended by many princes of the occident. Shortly afterwards she died, and the guardianship passed to Adelaide, Otto the Great's widow, with Archbishop Willigis of Mainz exercising greatest influence.

After the death of the Empress Theophano rebellions of pagan tribes flared up again. Everywhere the blood of Christian knights was flowing from sacrificial altars. Hamburg was plundered and burned. A combined Danish-Norwegian fleet pushed forward into the mouth of the Elbe and Weser rivers. Had they been able to establish a permanent foothold, they would probably have united the entire pagan world under their leadership. But in 994 they were defeated at the Weser river by an army headed by the boy-emperor.

Emperor Otto III (983—1002), the Hellenic-German youth, is one of the noblest figures in occidental history. With the dreams and the fervor of boyhood, and endowed with all the dignity and wisdom of youth, he fulfilled the task of the high office entrusted to him by history. In his twentyfirst year, he was taken up among the immortals, in accordance with the ancient saying that the gods call home early those whom they love.

For Otto III, the German nation was only of secondary importance; The Empire, greater than Germany, Italy, Burgundy, and all other subdivisions, was everything. Taking the reins of government into his own hands at the age of fifteen, he installed his aunt Matilda, a woman of great wisdom and strength, as regent in Germany and went to Italy. Rome to him was the legitimate centre, and he, as the lawful successor to Augustus and Theodosius the Great, set out to restore the Roman Empire to its ancient eminence.

What he undertook was to re-attach his office to Caesar's. This, in fact, was not unrealistic romanticism but in line with the ideas of his epoch. His contemporaries called him "the Marvel of the World" for his political vision but also his mature judgement, so astounding in so young a ruler.

In 996, the sixteen-year-old emperor received the imperial crown from a twentyfour-year old pope, Gregory V. This was his cousin, Bruno

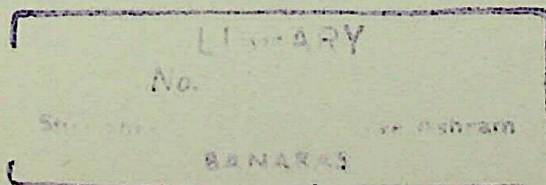


of Carinthia, whom he had helped to ascend the Chair of St. Peter. It must have been one of the great dramatic moments of history. A chiliaric fever of hope, fear, and expectation swept across the occidental world at the end of the first Christian millennium. Christ's second coming was by many held to be imminent. During this period, when people in all countries prepared themselves for the Awful Judgement, the reins of the world's government were held by two glowing youths, both filled with highest ideals and conscious of the exalted position of their respective offices. The complete harmony between the spiritual and the temporal orders must have appeared as a foreshadowing of the coming of the Kingdom.

Only three years later Gregory V, the first German pope died. His successor was Sylvester II, the first Frenchman to occupy the Holy See, raised to this supreme office by the Hellenic-German emperor. Sylvester, formerly Gerbert, archbishop of Rheims, was Otto's teacher and friend, one of the most learned men of his time.

Emperor Otto III died in 1002 at Paternò, near Rome, and was buried at Aachen, alongside the tomb of Charlemagne. He had set his stamp upon the face of Europe for the next thousand years. The founding of two kingdoms, Poland and Hungary, was his work. It was he who brought about the marriage of Waik, heir to the Hungarian realm, with Gisela of Bavaria on the condition that the Hungarian prince with his whole people should adopt Christianity, and this included recognition of the preeminence of the two Powers, empire and papacy.

According to Polish chroniclers Duke Boleslav Chrobry received the royal crown in 1000 A. D. from the hands of the emperor. Establishing the archbishopric of Gnesen, with jurisdiction over the bishoprics of Kolberg, Cracow, and Breslau (these up to that time, had been under the jurisdiction of Magdeburg), was an important contribution toward the formation of a Polish nation. Received by the new Polish king with exuberant joy and elaborate honors, Otto emancipated the Poles from German sovereignty. In doing so, however, he emphasized the continuance of imperial authority. What seemed essential to him was a right relationship between the universal body and the nations, not the submission of one European kingdom under another. Germany was but one of these kingdoms; it was not identical with the Empire.





## IV

## THE SALIAN EMPERORS

With Otto III the elder line of the house of Saxony became extinct. His successor, sponsored by St. Willigis, the powerful archbishop of Mainz and chancellor of the empire, was Duke Henry of Bavaria, grandson of Otto the Great's younger brother Henry. To the Church in Germany and the temporal lords, his character seemed to guarantee greater independence from Rome than Otto III's Rome-centered policy.

Emperor Henry II (1002—1024) — as St. Henry the patron saint of Germany — had been elected by the Bavarians and Franks. Before the powerful Saxons would do him homage, he had to recognize by solemn agreement their laws and customs, as well as their voice in the exercise of governmental power.

This important agreement, which for the first time subjected the German monarchy to constitutional limitations, may be compared to the Magna Carta which was sworn to by King John of England two hundred years later, in 1215. Later on similar agreements were concluded between the German kings and the princes at every election. However, it would oversimplify matters to assume that these limitations imposed upon the royal power did necessarily benefit the people. In many cases they only served to increase the power of the princes and barons, leading finally to unrestricted regional absolutism and the disintegration of the empire.

Emperor Henry II powerfully asserted the imperial prerogatives in Italy (he was first crowned in Pavia), in Burgundy, the East, and Germany proper. In 1014, during the second of his expeditions to Italy, he was crowned in Rome also. On his third expedition (1021—1022), imperial authority was re-affirmed over the Langobardic principalities in Southern Italy. In Bohemia, too, his overlordship was recognized against the ambitions of King Boleslav Chrobry of Poland. In this connection the first Russian-German alliance in history, between Emperor Henry and Jaroslav the Wise, prince of Kiev, was concluded in 1017.

In ecclesiastic matters Henry strictly upheld the royal prerogatives against the bishops and other ecclesiastical lords. He died in the royal castle of Grons near Göttingen and was buried with his consort, St. Cunegund, in the romanesque-gothic cathedral at Bamberg, see of a bishopric which he himself had founded.

Henry's successor Conrad II (1024—1032) was a descendant of a daughter of Otto the Great. He is the founder of the Franconian — or



**Salian** — House and one of the Empire's most impressive figures. At the very beginning of his reign, he repelled the East Roman emperor Basileus II who wished to bring the whole of Lower Italy — perhaps Rome itself — under his sceptre, after having defeated the Lombards and Normans at Cannae in 1018. Conrad's coronation, which was held in 1027, in the presence of King Canute the Great of Denmark and England, was one of the most resplendent in the history of the Middle Ages.

Conrad's position was threatened by an uprising of the princes in Germany, headed by the emperor's stepson, Duke Ernest of Suevia, by a rebellion of the northern Lombards who destroyed the imperial palace in Pavia, and by an invasion of the Polish king Mieszko II reaching west as far as the Saale river. However, Mieszko was defeated in 1031 and forced to hand back his conquests. At Merseburg he surrendered to the Emperor and renounced his royal title. The uprising of the princes also collapsed when Duke Ernest was killed in battle.

As a result of the union of Burgundy with the German crown the western passes of the Alps came into German hands — a prerequisite for the Italian policy of the Salians and later on the Hohenstaufen. To restrain the power of the princes Conrad II encouraged the lower nobility and vassals. He made the small fiefs hereditary and transferred the duchies of Bavaria and Suevia to his son. In 1037, at Pavia, during his second expedition to Italy, he promulgated the law of feudal tenure. His intention was to gain the support of the lesser vassals in Germany and Italy who were loyal to empire and emperor. He also maintained friendly relations with the North, especially King Canute the Great. The Eider river became the border of the German kingdom.

In 1029 Conrad laid the cornerstone for the cathedral of Speyer, which was to become a "German Rome", expression of the spirit of the Christian-Imperial age. When he died in 1039, the cathedral which for several centuries remained the largest in the occident, was far enough advanced that he could be laid to rest in it.

Under Conrad's great son, Henry III (1039—1056) the Empire attained new heights. In 1044, Hungary, where a pagan uprising had flared up, became a fief of the German crown. The borders between the Ostmark (later Austria) and Hungary, which the Emperor established along the rivers Leitha and March, remained stable until 1199. A pagan rebellion had also broken out in Poland, and in 1039 Duke Bredislav of Bohemia made use of the chaos in Poland to occupy Breslau and for a time to dominate the country. The plan of a Pan-



Slav empire, as opposed to the Roman-German one, became visible, but Emperor Henry joined forces with Casimir of Poland, marched on Bohemia, and took Prague. Bredislav was forced to surrender. He handed back the Polish conquests, and Casimir restored Christianity in his reconquered country.

Under the rule of Henry III and the spiritual leadership of Archbishop Adalbert of Bremen the Christianization of northern Europe, up to Finland, Greenland and Iceland was initiated. Prince Gottschalk of the Abodriti in Mecklenburg on the Baltic Sea was also converted. About the year 1060 the two bishoprics of Ratzeburg and Schwerin could be established there.

Henry and his consort, Agnes of Poitou, were adherents of the strict reformist movement originating from the Cluny monastery in France, which combated "simony" (the buying and selling of ecclesiastical offices) and the secularization of the clergy. In 1046, at the synods of Sutri and Rome during his first expedition to Italy, the emperor caused the deposition of three rivaling popes, all of them unworthy of their office. Spontaneously the Romans revived for the emperor the age-old title and rights of a *Patricius Romanus*, thereby giving him and his successors a decisive voice at all future papal elections. Henry now secured the election of Bishop Suidger of Bamberg, as Pope Clement II. Several times he used his patrician rights to procure the election of German reformist popes — for example, Bruno of Toul, a nephew of Pope Gregory V, who became Leo IX. Pope and emperor cooperated in the reform of Church and Empire.

Like most of the emperors, Henry III died young, in his thirty-ninth year. He, too, was buried at Speyer. His heart, encased in gold, rests in a magnificent stone sarcophagus at Goslar, a town which he had dearly loved. To this day, Goslar, at the foot of the Harz mountains, has preserved much of its charm and medieval beauty. Henry's III son and successor, Henry IV (1056—1106), was then only six years of age. Even during his father's lifetime he had been elected king and crowned at Aachen. The period of his rule was one of dramatic events, just as his life itself was of tragic greatness.

Up to the time of Henry IV the relations between the spiritual and temporal powers had been harmonious, ever since in the fourth century the edicts of the emperors Constantine and Theodosius had given the Church its freedom. The struggle which now began shook the occident to its very foundations.

A highly gifted and ambitious monk, Hildebrand, first as chancellor



of the Holy Roman Church and then as Pope Gregory VII, embarked on a policy intended in setting up the Church almost as a "Super-Empire". After the victory of William the Conqueror at Hastings in 1066, Hildebrand encouraged a Norman kingdom in England independent of the Empire. In the same way the Church recognized the Norman state in Southern Italy under Robert Guiscard as independent and "absolved" from any obligation of obedience to the Empire, Eastern as well as Western. The patrician rights of the emperor were ignored at the papal elections, in spite of their being reconfirmed at the Lateran synod in 1059.

In 1065 Henry IV came of age. In 1073 a Saxon rebellion broke out, headed by the powerful Count Otto of Nordheim. It was as if this tribe, which for generations had served the Empire, were reverting to its pre-Charlemagne days. At the same time the weakening of the imperial power through the events in Sicily and England affected the status of the emperor as German king. That same year Hildebrand became pope (1073—1085). Immediately he set out to impose his power not only upon the Church, but over the Empire as well. As legal foundation for his aspirations he used the "Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals". These Church decrees, partly authentic, partly forged, partly altered to fit the purpose, originated in the diocese of Rheims between 847 and 852. They aimed at establishing the supremacy of the bishops over the temporal authorities, and of the papacy over the empire as restored by Charlemagne. Also, they aimed at giving the pope supremacy over the general Church councils and establishing his position as sovereign law giver and universal arbiter.

Backed by the Decretals, Gregory even demanded that the election of an emperor to be crowned by the Pope should henceforth require papal confirmation.

The Emperor thereupon convoked a bishops' synod at Worms in 1076, which declared the pope deposed. The pope, in turn, excommunicated the emperor. This enabled the rebellious princes, always intent on weakening the imperial authority, to demand that the emperor clear himself of all papal charges within a year, failing which they would revoke their allegiance to him.

Henry IV outmaneuvered both Gregory and the princes by humbling himself before the pope in the courtyard of the castle of Canossa in Central Italy in 1077. Gregory was forced — after hesitating for three days — to absolve him and receive him back into the Church.

It took three years of civil war until Henry was able to master the



situation in Germany. He gave the duchy of Suevia to Frederick of Stauf, who was married to Henry's daughter Agnes. In 1081, after he had been excommunicated for the second time, he set out for Italy. The notables, ecclesiastical and secular, south of the Alps — more loyal than the Germans — flocked to the imperial banner. In 1084 he was crowned in Rome by Pope Clement III, formerly archbishop of Ravenna, who had been elected in opposition to Gregory. Gregory died the following year at Salerno, where he had fled to put himself under the protection of the Normans.

The last years of the emperor's life were overshadowed by a revolt of his sons Conrad and Henry. When he was on his second expedition to Italy, they for four years prevented his return home; then the younger one after Conrad's death treacherously captured and imprisoned his father. But another power came into play, a power on the side of the Emperor — the German people. Henry IV was able to escape from his prison, and before he died shortly afterwards at Liege, he was triumphant, with his imperial rights universally recognized. Five years after his death, he too was buried at Speyer.

As a ruler, his son and successor Emperor Henry V (1106—1125) was not without power and greatness. He, too, successfully asserted himself in Italy, Poland, Hungary and Bohemia. This secured for him the support of the princes, and also of the clergy whom he invested with their offices. The cities were on his side, and he continued Conrad's policy by leaning on the lower strata of the vassals. He was crowned emperor in Rome in 1111.

After much struggle and negotiation, the long dispute over "investiture" — meaning the question whether the Emperor or the Pope should appoint bishops and other princes of the Church to their offices — was settled in 1122 by the Concordat of Worms. A compromise was reached. While the Pope was to invest the bishops with spiritual authority, the Emperor would confer on them the temporal fiefs pertaining to the spiritual office. In Germany, appointment to the secular office was to take place prior to consecration; in Italy and Burgundy, after.

Henry V was married to Matilda, daughter and heiress of King Henry I, the youngest son of William the Conqueror. Since, however, they remained childless, the marriage, which could have been of great historic importance, did not lead to the union of England and Normandy with the Empire.

The terms "Guelf" and "Ghibelline" received their political significance in the period of Henry IV and Henry V. Originally the design-



nation for the two great Houses of Welf and Waibling which were competing for the supreme office, they soon came to have a figurative meaning. Welf, italianized Guelf, came to denote the concept for, first, power regionally limited and opposed to the universal idea, then opposition to the Emperor and support for the Pope. It was mainly in Italy that the Guelf faction upheld this policy. Ghibelline, the italianized form of Waibling (as the Hohenstaufen were also called after one of their castles) became expressive of universal imperial power, based on the idea that the Emperor was directly responsible to God, not deriving his political authority from Pope or Church.

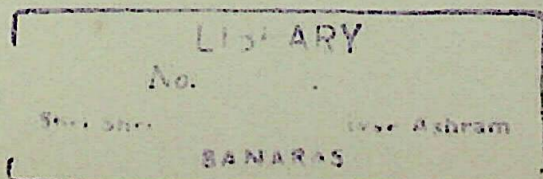
The Ghibelline doctrine as practiced by the Hohenstaufen house was contained in the *Sachsenspiegel* (Saxon Mirror, a famous book of law written down in the thirteenth century by a learned nobleman, Eyke von Repgow). It is that there were two swords left behind by Christ "to protect humanity". Christ gave to the Pope the spiritual sword and to the Emperor the temporal one. The Guelf doctrine was taught by Pope Gregory VII and the *Schwabenspiegel* (Suevian Mirror), a law book with a message opposite to that of the Saxon Mirror. It is that Christ gave both swords to Peter the Apostle, and that the temporal one is lent to the Emperors, by the Popes, as the successors of Peter. To this the Ghibellines retorted that Christ's supreme authority over all things spiritual *and* temporal, was not transmitted to the Popes. Papal power to bind and to solve is restricted to matters spiritual, it does not include authority either to repeal imperial laws or to promulgate papal ones binding upon the secular order.

## V

### HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

By ties of blood as well as in their policy of independence from the Papacy, Conrad and Frederick, the sons of Duke Frederick of Suevia and his consort Agnes, daughter of Henry IV, were the rightful heirs of the Salian House. Only recently had the Hohenstaufen emerged into the light of history. While Frederick of Büren, the father of the first duke of Suevia and a loyal supporter of Henry IV, did not yet have political importance, his grandsons were able to give to their uncle, Emperor Henry V, active assistance. Frederick had succeeded his father as duke of Suevia, Conrad was invested with the duchy of

31





**Franconia.** On Henry's death the Hohenstaufen brothers inherited also the Salian possessions, and they became almost identified with the extinct Salian house.

It was, however, precisely because of this dominating position that the powerful Archbishop Adalbert of Mainz secured the election of another candidate, Count Lothar of Supplinburg (1125—37) who had been invested with the duchy of Saxony in 1106. Wholly in the spirit of his clerical supporters, Lothar was the first German king to ask for papal confirmation of his election, while, at first, ignoring the rights given him by the Concordat of Worms. He outlawed the Hohenstaufen and declared their possessions and duchies forfeited. Duke Conrad of Franconia went to Italy, where he assumed the title of king and was crowned by the archbishop of Milan. But he was unable to maintain himself, the power of the Welfs being too great.

Under Lothar, the German colonization of the East made good progress. Albert the Bear of the Ascanian House, since 1150 calling himself Margrave of Brandenburg, received the Northern march, Conrad of Wettin the march of Meissen from Henry V and that of Lausitia from Lothar. At the same time, under the auspices of the Empire, Pomerania was converted to Christianity by Bishop Otto of Bamberg.

Lothar made two expeditions to Italy. In 1135 he was crowned in the Lateran basilica by Pope Innocent II whose election was of doubtful validity. During the second expedition (1136—37) he expelled the Normans from Lower Italy. Roger II of Sicily had supported Pope Anacletus II, of the distinguished Jewish family of Pierleoni, elected in 1130 by a majority of the Cardinals against Innocent.

Peace with the Hohenstaufen was finally mediated thanks to Pope Innocent and the eloquence of St. Bernhard of Clairvaux. At the Princes' Day at Bamberg in 1134, Frederick submitted to Emperor Lothar and Conrad, renouncing his royal title, was recognized as standard-bearer of the Empire.

When Lothar died he desired that his son-in-law, Henry the Proud, duke of Bavaria and Saxony, should become his successor, but now Henry's position of power reacted against him, even among ecclesiastical circles. Instead, Conrad of Hohenstaufen was elected as King Conrad III (1138—52). He put Henry the Proud under the ban of the Empire and transferred Saxony to the Ascanian Margrave Albert the Bear. Bavaria he gave to his halfbrother, Margrave Leopold IV of Austria of the house of Babenberg, after whose death it passed on to his brother Henry Jasomirgott. But Guelf power was not so easily broken.



When Henry the Proud died his brother Welf carried on the struggle on behalf of his young son Henry, later called "the Lion", who eventually received Saxony and Bavaria back.

Under Conrad III, imperial authority nearly succumbed to the powerful German princes, although Conrad, showing already some of the later traits of his illustrious family, the Hohenstaufen whom the poet Heinrich Heine has called "earthly suns in the German imperial mantle", was high-minded and conscious of the dignity of his office. Prompted by Bernhard of Clairvaux, he joined, together with his nephew Frederick of Suevia — later Emperor Frederick I — in the luckless second crusade (1147—49). During his stay in Constantinople he prepared the marriage of his son Henry with a daughter of the East Roman Emperor Manuel I. Perhaps he was thinking of a reunification of the two, now separated, parts of the Empire.

This son Henry died even before his father, and a younger son was still in his infancy when Conrad came to die. On his deathbed, the Emperor therefore had the greatness of mind to send the imperial insignia, the symbols of rulership, to his nephew instead, who had already distinguished himself as a statesman and military leader. This nephew was Frederick I (1152—60), called "Barbarossa" (Italian word for "Red Beard"). With him indelible glory was to begin for the Empire.

Barbarossa's name has remained a living symbol of paternal, universal, imperial power. For this he lived and worked; and for this he finally laid down his life as Christendom's leader in the third crusade. On the first of his expeditions to Italy (1154—55) he was crowned emperor in the Lateran basilica by Adrian IV, the only Englishman ever to become Pope.

In 1156 Frederick I invested Henry the Lion with Bavaria. The same year saw the birth of Austria, which Frederick detached from Bavaria and raised to the status of a duchy in its own right. Through the so-called *Privilegium minus*, he established that none of his successors should ever impair the new duchy's rightful status.

In 1158, the Emperor made Duke Vladislav of Bohemia hereditary king. Bohemia, Western-minded already, now became one of the most loyal members of the empire.

Denmark, too, recognized the overlordship of the Emperor, and at Merseburg King Sven carried the sword before him as his vassal. The Empire's supremacy over Poland was also confirmed when, in 1157, Barbarossa crossed the Oder river on a broad front. The German colonization of Silesia on both banks of the river dates from that period.



Most of the European princes attended, either personally or by representative, Frederick's diets at Besançon (1157), Regensburg (1158), and on the Roncalian Fields (1158). Henry II, King of England, sent precious gifts. He, too, the mightiest ruler after the Emperor, acknowledged the Empire's overlordship.

At the diet on the Roncalian Fields, upon the insistence of the crown jurists, Roman law was recognized once more as the basic law of the Empire. Frederick for his part declared that he wished to reign over "an empire founded on the rule of law, so that everyone's freedom may be safeguarded".

In 1186, in a conscious adoption of late Roman constitutional forms, Frederick made his son Henry co-regent and bestowed upon him as the designate heir the title of Caesar. Henry's marriage with Constance, heiress to the Norman kingdom of Sicily and Southern Italy brought the dreamland of the south into the orbit of the Empire.

The name "Holy Roman Empire", *Sacrum Imperium Romanum* (later with the addition *Germanicae nationis*, "of the German Nation") also dates back to the Roncalian Fields. This word *sacrum*, often misunderstood, has a variety of meanings. In constitutional language it expressed the idea of uninterrupted legal continuity with the Roman empire of the Caesars. In those early days *sacer* "set apart" — the original meaning of the word — signified all that had a bearing on the person of the Roman emperor. Since it was the imperial majesty to which it appertained it was hallowed, set apart, distinct from the common and profane. But in medieval times the meaning *Sacrum Imperium* — "Holy Empire" — was justified for still other reasons. The Empire was held to have been founded by God and destined to embrace the whole of mankind. It was conceived, therefore, as stretching to the very limits of nature. The Christian countries acknowledged its pre-eminence, and all the pagan land belonged to the Emperor to be claimed by him for Christ, so that one day the whole world would be brought under the authority of the Roman universal crown and under the rule of the Cross.

At the imperial diet at Würzburg on the Main, in 1165, where Frederick married Beatrix of Burgundy, he made the bishop of Würzburg duke of Franconia. The Byzantine emperor, too, was represented by ambassadors who rendered homage to Frederick as Roman Emperor and Lord of the World.

Ably supported by his great chancellor Count Reinald of Dassel, archbishop of Cologne, Frederick emerged victorious from many a hard



struggle against the rebellious Lombards, who had Milan as their stronghold, and against the papal ambitions for political power. But he did not achieve this without also suffering serious setbacks. In the battle of Legnano (May 29, 1176) the universal power was for the first time defeated by separatist forces, with insurgent city republics triumphing over the Empire. This defeat might have become a catastrophe, had not Barbarossa by superior statesmanship succeeded in concluding an honourable peace at Venice in 1177, with Pope Alexander III, the Lombards' most important ally.

Legnano was due to the treason of Henry the Lion, who had refused to add his forces (as he was bound to do) to the imperial army. Frederick, son of a Welf mother, had restored Bavaria as well as the duchy of Saxony to Henry. It was his own domains which mattered to Henry, not his duty to the universal empire, even though he owed his territories to that very empire.

The disobedient duke was placed under the ban of the empire. Saxony was partitioned, and in 1180 Bavaria was given to the Count Palatine Otto of Wittelsbach, a loyal supporter of the emperor and the empire. The Wittelsbachs reigned in Bavaria till 1918. After Henry had submitted at Erfurt in 1181, the Emperor was magnanimous enough to permit him to retain his personal inheritance Brunswick-Lüneburg.

As leader of the third crusade (during which he was to meet his death in the river Saleph in 1189), Frederick could have overthrown the weak East Roman government. But it was the Holy Sepulchre, not the throne of Constantinople, which he had come to seek.

## VI

### SUNS OF THIS EARTH IN THE GERMAN IMPERIAL MANTLE

In Hohenstaufen days the western boundaries of the German kingdom ran along the Rhone and the Scheldt. In the east they had already spread beyond the Oder river when the duchy of Pomerania became a German fief in 1181. South of the Alps, imperial Italy (the northern and central part of the peninsula with the exception of the *Patrimonium Petri*, the Papal State) also formed part of it. Emperor Henry VI (1190—96), Barbarossa's son, and Emperor Frederick II (1212—50) extended the power of the German kings and of the Empire still farther towards the south and northeast.



For one short hour of history, Henry VI held unchallenged sway over the Empire founded by Charlemagne, restored by Otto the Great and ennobled by the imperial dream of Otto III as well as the Hohenstaufen ideal of justice. Nowhere during Henry's all-too-short reign did the particularistic powers prevail against the imperial authority. As the historian Leopold von Ranke has expressed it, Henry was "Lord of the Syrian coast and overlord of Armenia and England". With a firm hand he subdued the Sicilian kingdom, the heritage of his consort, Empress Constance. When he entered Palermo, the capital of Sicily, in 1194, the people prostrated themselves, trembling before the triumphant king of the universe.

Henry had hoped to make the imperial crown hereditary in his House, but he died, at the age of thirty-two, before his achievements could be consolidated.

At his death, his son Frederick was only three years old. For the nordic people, Frederick's life-story reads like a fairytale of portents, miracles and legends, for those in the south it is the ageless story of a semi-divine hero ascending swiftly to triumphant heights, then setting like a flaming star, unvanquished and at an hour by himself determined. Protector of the Church, King of Jerusalem, not without some traces of the "Antichrist", and yet the Emperor of Salvation who at his second coming, it was said, would scourge the worldliness of the Church, enforce the equality of the law and restore the Roman Empire of the Germans. He will lay down the universal crown upon the Holy Sepulchre, so that never more may sword be drawn or blood be spilled. This is the awe-inspiring vision of the Pantocrator, the Universal Ruler, a spark of which is still alive today in the legends told about him among the people in Sicily and Apulia.

*Puer Apuliae* — the Boy from Apulia. That was the name they gave to the imperial youth when he first came to Germany, after a childhood of most varied destiny, when he was poor at times like any of the poorest boys in the streets of Palermo. This was after his father's youngest brother, Philip of Suevia, had been murdered in 1208, and Otto IV (1198—1215), the son of Henry the Lion, seized power as German king and Roman emperor.

Frederick was supported on his perilous path to the North only by the blessing of his former guardian, the great Pope Innocent III, who would no longer tolerate Otto's encroachments in Southern Italy. But on his side were his genius, the magic of the Staufen name, and the beauty of youth. Frederick was elected king in Frankfurt in 1212. He



entered into an alliance with France against the Welf emperor who was connected with England by treaty and ties of blood. The victory of the French arms at the battle of Bouvines (1214) decided at the same time the struggle for the Empire. Also, the position of the King of England was so weakened as a result of his defeat that in 1215 his barons could compel him to sign the Magna Carta.

Frederick II received the imperial crown in Rome in 1220. On the same day he issued his first law against heretics. This must be understood out of the theocratic concept of society according to which the heretic was regarded also as a traitor against the temporal order. He was, in a way, more dangerous than a political rebel attacking only the individual holder of power without casting doubt on the fundamental principles of spiritual and temporal authority. Other standards applied for those who, such as Moslems, Saracens or Jews, stood outside the community of faith. They enjoyed the imperial tolerance. To protect the Jews who according to the flesh were of the tribe of Christ, was a prerogative and a sacred duty of the Christian emperors.

Two privileges, one granted to the ecclesiastical princes in 1220 and one, in 1231, in favour of the lay princes, had a lasting influence on the German constitution. Their far-reaching prerogatives anticipated the fateful recognition of territorial "sovereignty" by the peace treaty of Westphalia in 1648. The reproach that may be levelled against Frederick II is that he underestimated the importance of a consolidated Germany as a nucleus of power keeping the centrifugal forces of the universal empire together. In his own hereditary kingdom of Sicily, however, which he developed into Europe's first modern state, he sought to counterbalance the loss of royal right suffered in Germany.

In 1227, Frederick was excommunicated by Pope Gregory IX on the ground that he had postponed a promised crusade. Still under the ban, the Emperor carried out the crusade, and, after statesmanlike negotiations with the Egyptian Sultan El Kamil, he entered Jerusalem without a fight. This Crusade (1228—29), the Sixth, was the most unusual of all. After the death of his first consort, Constance of Aragon, who bore him the ill-starred king Henry VII, Frederick had married Yolanta, heiress to the kingdom of Jerusalem, who became the mother of his son Conrad. Thus, Frederick claimed the Holy Land by virtue of inheritance when he reunited this one-time Roman province to the Empire. In 1229, in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, Frederick crowned himself — an act repeated by Napoleon, in Notre Dame de Paris 577 years later.



Frederick's most loyal friend was Hermann of Salza, Grand Master of the Teutonic Order founded during the siege of Acre in 1190. True both to Empire and Church, Hermann was the mediator in all disputes between the Emperor and the popes. When the Polish duke Conrad of Masovia was no longer able to ward off the heathen "Prussians" (or Pruzzi), he turned to Hermann of Salza, with moving pleas urging the knights to settle in the Kulmer Land. From 1228 to 1230 the duke presented Hermann with five documents of donation culminating in the Treaty of Crusvica, which turned that land over to the Order "for perpetual possession".

Frederick recognized the arrangement by the Golden Bull of Rimini of 1226, endowing the Grand Master and his successors with the status and privileges of princes of the Holy Empire. The emperor outlined the Teutonic Knights' program of action for centuries to come. He may rightly be called the founder of the Prussian state. The black and white of the Orders's mantle became the Prussian colours.

The importance of the newly established "Ordensland" was revealed soon enough during the Mongol invasion. After the Polish princes had been defeated despite heroic resistance, the Teutonic Order covered the Empire's most northerly flank. At Easter 1240 Cracow was destroyed. When Duke Henry the Pious, a son of St. Hedwig, duchess of Silesia, was killed in the battle of Liegnitz (1241), King Wenceslas of Bohemia came to the rescue of the Empire. The city founded in 1255 was named "Königsberg" (Mount Royal) in honor of his son, King Ottokar II ("the Great"), a faithful friend and helper of the Order. That city became the capital of the German province of East Prussia.

By conferring on Lübeck the freedom of the empire in 1226, thereby exempting the city from any authority but the emperor's, Frederick II provided a further impulse for Christian civilization to expand along the Baltic to Europe's north and north-east. The jurisdiction of Lübeck's high court later extended to many towns along the Baltic Sea as far east as Reval and Narva. Another city leading in matters of culture and law was Magdeburg. At the time of its greatest influence "Magdeburg Law" extended as far east as the Dnieper river, it was adopted by Dünaburg, Kiev and the major part of Poland — more than six hundred and fifty towns and cities, including Warsaw. In Podolia, Volhynia and the Ukraine, Magdeburg law, later called "German law", remained in force until 1831.

The German cities were faithful to the empire. They sought the Emperor's protection against the princes who wished to dominate them.



In this they were very different from the cities of Lombardy which time and again combined with the papacy as a political power against the Emperor. Frederick II, too, had to subdue the Lombards in hard fighting.

In 1239, the Emperor was excommunicated by Pope Gregory IX for the second time. Perhaps this Emperor was too far ahead of his time. He wished to found his rule on reason and human justice in a very modern sense. He was, in a way, the first Renaissance prince. With his train of philosophers and artists, some of Arabic origin, with his magnificent court life he captivated the imagination of the peoples. But to others he appeared, according to the spirit of the age, as the "Tempter", the "Subverter", almost the "Antichrist".

At the Council of Lyons in 1245 the Pope declared Frederick "deposed" — a wholly illegal and presumptuous action. In a flood of open letters, Pope and Emperor canvassed the minds of the princes and the peoples. Something like a "European public opinion" came into being. The masterly stylist of the imperial chancellery was Petrus of Vineia, for many years the Emperor's closest counselor.

Despite painful reverses including the capture of Enzo — who next to Manfred was his favorite son — the Emperor died undefeated, on December 13, 1250, at Castello Fiorentino in Apulia. He was buried in the Cathedral of Palermo, in a wonderful porphyry sarcophagus supported by mystic creatures of a bygone age. Emperor Henry VI, the Empress Constance, her father King Roger and Frederick's first wife Constance of Aragon are all laid to rest in the same chapel.

In the far south, whence as *Puer Apuliae* he had once come, Frederick's life was suddenly extinguished. It seemed inconceivable that he should no longer rule over Christendom, and soon myths and legends sprang up around him such as the tale of the sleeping Emperor in the Kyffhäuser caves. Not until the sixteenth century was the image of Frederick II replaced in these legends by that of his ancestor Frederick Barbarossa. This transmutation is not without a deeper meaning. Ever since the downfall of the House of Hohenstaufen did the suffering German people, exposed to wars and internal dissension, yearn for a paternal ruler who would afford peace and protection, always ready to lend a compassionate ear to his people.

Even today the downfall of the Hohenstaufen house strikes us as an awe-inspiring tragedy. Frederick's son Conrad IV (1250—54) fought unsuccessfully in Italy and died without having seen his heir Conradin, born of his wife Elizabeth of Bavaria in Germany. After Conrad, Fre-



derick's natural son Manfred who perhaps resembled his father most restored once more the Sicilian kingdom. "Blond was he, beautiful and of noble mien", Dante wrote about him in the "Divine Comedy". His name never faded from the memory of the people. He was killed in 1266 in the battle of Benevento, fighting against the usurper Charles of Anjou whom Pope Urban IV had called into the country.

Then the hopes of the Empire rested on the fifteen-year-old Conradin, "the fairest youth in all the land", who entered Ghibellinic Rome in triumph in 1268. But after the battle of Tagliacozzo, Conradin was betrayed into the hands of the Anjou who had him beheaded on October 29, 1268 on the Mercato Vecchio (the Old Market Place) in Naples together with his young friend Frederick of Baden and Austria, and the other prisoners. At the spot where he died, his mother Elisabeth founded the church Santa Maria del Carmine. A statue of Conradin, created by the great Danish sculptor Thorwaldsen in 1847 by order of King Maximilian II of Bavaria, now stands above the grave of the last of the Hohenstaufen.

With Conrad IV began the "Interregnum", a lawless period when no supreme ruler and judge protected the people. William of Holland (1246—57), Alfonso of Castile (1257—72), and Richard of Cornwall (1257—73) were kings in name only.

Despite all decay, the idea of the universal empire survived. The election of Rudolf of Habsburg (1273—91), a man with a Hohenstaufen frame of mind — he was a god-son of Emperor Frederick II — opened up a new epoch. The first edicts against private feuds, especially of the robber barons and for general public peace (Landfrieden) are his work. His victory in 1278 over Ottokar the Great, king of Bohemia and duke of Austria, laid the foundations for the power of the house of Habsburg. He vested Austria, Styria and Carinthia in his son Albrecht. To placate the papacy however, he renounced the claims of the Empire in Southern Italy.

The rising power of the house of Habsburg induced the other princes to pass Albrecht over and elect Count Adolph of Nassau instead as king. Adolph (1291—98) allied himself with the cities and the lesser nobility. To protect the imperial rights in Burgundy and in the kingdom of Arles he formed an alliance with Edward I of England against King Philip IV of France. But the German princes left him without support, and France was able to push her frontiers ever further eastward. In 1307 the city of Lyons and the right bank of the Rhone became French. Only forty-two years later the whole of the Dauphiné was under the

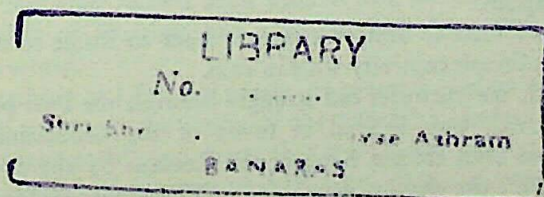


French crown. But when it appeared that King Adolph might be able to consolidate his position in Germany, the princes declared him deposed and now chose Albrecht of Austria as their new king. In the battle of Gölheim in 1298 Adolph lost both throne and life.

Albrecht I (1298—1308) was a man of statesmanlike qualities. He was the first of the Habsburgs to acquire the kingdom of Bohemia, when the Přemyslids became extinct after the death of Wenceslas III in 1306. He declared it a vacant fief and conferred it in his son Rudolph. Allied with France and with the Rhenish cities in whose favor he abolished all customs duties imposed since the death of Emperor Frederick II, he quelled a revolt of the Electors and the Rhenish archbishops. In 1308 he was murdered by his nephew, Duke John Parricida of Austria. Like his father, Albrecht concerned himself more with enhancing the power of his House than with the affairs of the Empire.

A fresh start was made with the imperial policy in Italy by his successor, Count Henry of Luxemburg. In Emperor Henry VII (1308—1313), who in 1310 went to Italy, the Ghibellines, headed by Dante Alighieri of Florence, welcomed the rebirth of the supranational, universal office. It was at that time that Dante wrote his *De monarchia*, in which, in a language that is still timely, he expounded the need for a supreme Judge, independent of human passions or vested interests. A government was legitimate, he wrote, only if it served justice, and the freedom of the people. What a highminded conception of true democracy centuries before that word became a program and a battle-cry!

In 1310 Emperor Henry VII invested his son with the kingdom of Bohemia. In 1312 he was crowned emperor in the Lateran basilica, but he died shortly afterwards, and with his death the hopes of the Ghibellines came to naught.





## VII

## DUSK OF THE EMPIRE

Seven years after Dante's death his vision of a restoration of the Empire seemed to be coming true once more. History threw into the lap of Emperor Ludwig the Bavarian (1314—47) what it had denied to Frederick II. Ludwig had the full support of the free cities of the Empire, and his own House Wittelsbach was a European power. The Palatinate, the duchy of Bavaria, the Tyrol, the Brandenburg margraviate, Holland, Friesland and large parts of what is now Belgium — all these came under the rule of his house.

This was the time of the "Babylonian captivity" of the Church — as the humiliating exile of the popes in the French town of Avignon was called. During seven pontificates (1305—78) the popes remained far from Rome, the spiritual capital of the West. In Avignon, however, they were dominated by the French monarchy which used the papacy for its own political designs, foremost among them the weakening of Germany.

French hopes that the election of an anti-king against Ludwig the Bavarian, Frederick the Handsome of Austria, and the ensuing civil war would give France the upper hand in Central Europe were frustrated by Ludwig's victory at Mühldorf in 1322. To the dismay of the French orientated pope, John XXII, Ludwig even succeeded in winning the defeated opponent Frederick as his most loyal friend. Shortly afterwards the pope asked Ludwig to abdicate, as his election lacked papal confirmation. To seek such confirmation would of course have meant to place the imperial office indirectly under the control of the French kings.

When Ludwig refused to comply, the pope excommunicated him. But supported by the Italian Ghibellines he went to Rome in 1327, where together with his consort he was crowned Emperor by the Roman people on the Capitol.

But his efforts to bring the papacy back to Rome in order to liberate it from its French captivity were in vain.

In 1338, the centuries old struggle between the two powers, temporal and spiritual, was decided in favor of the Ghibelline view: "When anyone has been elected King of the Romans by the princes electors of the Empire", the electors assembled at Rense near Cologne resolved, "or by the majority of them in case of dispute, he does not need the nomi-



nation, approbation, confirmation, assent, or authority of the Apostolic See in order to assume the administration of the rights and property of the Empire or the royal title". At the Diet of Frankfurt, shortly afterwards, Ludwig confirmed this by the decree *Licet iuris*: "The Emperor is made true Emperor by the election alone of those to whom it pertains", he declared, and "The imperial dignity and power comes directly from God alone".

The fourteenth century saw also the birth of German philosophy. It developed, as an interpretation of man and the world around and above him, from religious, mystic sources. Mysticism in this specific historic sense has nothing to do with some vague emotionalism or fleeting pietistic sentiment. It is rather a school of philosophy, an earnest endeavor to comprehend the divine. Certainly, there were visions of initiate minds, but the German mystics were striving to formulate in philosophic terms what had been revealed to them in the realm of the spirit. It was a philosophy of idealism, in this sense akin perhaps to the philosophy of India to which the world of phenomena is illusion, "maya", while the spirit alone possesses reality.

Nor is such a line of reasoning restricted to the Middle Ages. The German idealist philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, one of the great thinkers of all time, has followed it too, and so have many others from many nations. In its various schools and interpretations, Hegel's philosophy has had a tremendous impact not merely on thinking but on the ways of life of modern mankind.

The great names of German philosophers of the fourteenth century Mystic School are Master Eckhard, Johannes Tauler and Heinrich Suso, — men of clear minds and by no means unaware of the implications of the practical aspects of the world of man, for instance, social justice. The last in this line was Cardinal Nicolas Cusanus, a statesman of pre-eminence, a reformer of Church and Empire, a natural scientist and educator (d. 1464). One of the most progressive schools in modern Germany after 1945, the "Nikolaus Cusanus Gymnasium" at Bad Godesberg near Bonn has been named after him. It is a school conducted in the universal spirit of Cusanus and attended also by many students from all over the world.

The mystic, reaching out for the whole, discovers a perfect cosmos in his own soul. To attain to the limits of the knowable, indeed to God, he treads "the inward path", convinced that it will lead him further into the mysteries of nature, of his own soul, of God, than any empirical or purely rational testing of the world ever could.



Master Eckhard spoke about the *Seelenfünklein*, the spark of the soul where the highest reality, or the profoundest depth of truth can be reached. Here, in the innermost sanctuary of man's spiritual being the divine and the human meet.

Also German poetry received lasting impulses from mystic philosophy. *The Flowing Light of the Godhead* is the title of the first important book in the German language, by the great poetess Mechthild of Magdeburg (born in 1212, she died in 1280). Our heart's love is here revealed as the greatest of all treasures "wider than the world, deeper than the sea, higher than the clouds, fairer than the sun, and richer than the stars".

Mechthild's work was known to Dante Alighieri, it inspired him when he wrote the "Divine Comedy", the cosmic hymn of Love Divine.

The mystics, in their quest for harmony, were dedicated supporters of the universal empire with its spirit of peace and understanding among the nations.

In the cathedrals of the Romanesque period, God dwelt with man like in a mighty fortress. But to lift one's heart up to Him from the constraint of daily life — this new yearning was matched by the Gothic style of architecture which made its appearance in France since the end of the twelfth century and spread to Germany in the thirteenth. St. Elisabeth Church at Marburg is the first out-and-out Gothic structure in Germany, the cathedrals of Strassburg and Cologne and St. Stephen's in Vienna are marvels of Gothic achievement. The Gothic style was strongly influenced also by Moslem-Arabic architecture, so that at times it is difficult to discern whether a building is Gothic or Arab in origin. The communion between the Arabic and medieval-occidental spirit has built an important bridge between the continents, vaulting today from the Atlantic shores of Europe to the Near East, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, to the Moslem cities of India like Hyderabad, Ahmenabad and others, and as far south- and eastward as Malaya and Indonesia.

It was Sicily and the South of Italy under Norman and Hohenstaufen rulers where the union between East and West found an early and lasting expression. There we find the magnificent cathedrals of Cefalù and Monreale, the royal palace of Palermo, there are the many castles and churches in Apulia mirroring in style, form and colour the creative interrelation between the Empire of the West and the eastern spirit.

The Teutonic Order carried this spirit to the Baltic Sea on whose shore a "Second Sicily" soon began to flourish. The seat of the Grand-



masters, the marvellous Marienburg in present day's East Prussia, reflects the genius of the Hohenstaufen period.

Charles IV (1347—78), a grandson of Emperor Henry VII and son of the Luxemburg king John of Bohemia, was anti-king and then successor to Ludwig of Bavaria. He was crowned emperor by a Roman cardinal in 1355. A prudent and well educated man, he won, despite his unheroic appearance, once more respect and renewed authority for the imperial office.

In 1348 he founded the first German university at Prague. During a discord in the Bavarian House he put his hand on the march of Brandenburg, and he also brought Silesia and the Lausitz under the Bohemian crown. He ruled efficiently and conscientiously. In 1364 at Brünn, an agreement was reached with the Habsburgs providing that, should one of the two Houses become extinct, the other one would be its heir.

Of lasting importance was the *Golden Bull* of 1356, a constitution for the Empire which remained in force until 1806. The traditional rights of the four secular and three ecclesiastical Princes Electors were here acknowledged constitutionally, the three ecclesiastical being: the archbishops of Cologne, Mainz and Trier, the temporal four: the Count palatine of the Rhine, the Duke of Saxony, the Margrave of Brandenburg, and the King of Bohemia. Whenever the throne became vacant, the Count palatine was to be regent for the Western parts, the Duke of Saxony for the central and the eastern parts of the Empire. Nowhere was there any further mention of any papal right to confirm elections to the supreme office.

In 1378 Emperor Charles was succeeded by his eldest son Wenceslas who was deposed as emperor in 1400 but remained king of Bohemia until 1419. His reign marks a low point in the history of the empire. After his deposition and the exclusion of the House of Luxemburg from the succession, the electors chose Ruppert, the Count palatine of the Wittelsbach house, who in 1386 had founded the University of Heidelberg. As King he lacked the power to assert his authority either in Germany or in Italy. He died in 1410. There followed a split election. Some of the Electors, prompted by the Nuremberg burgrave Frederick IV of Hohenzollern, voted for Wenceslas' younger brother Sigismund, the others for his cousin Jobst of Moravia. Since Wenceslas refused to abdicate, there were now three emperors. There was similar confusion in the Church, which in 1378 had fallen into the Great Schism, with a pope in Avignon and another in Rome. The Council of



Pisa (1409) deposed both and elected a third, Alexander V and, after Alexander's death, John XXIII. Since the deposed popes would not abdicate, there were thus in addition to three emperors also three popes — a sad symbol of the breakdown of spiritual and temporal unity.

But once again a true emperor arose, in Sigismund of Luxemburg. (1410—37), younger son of Charles IV. At the Council of Constance (1414—17), the greatest European congress ever held, he presided with the ancient rights of the Emperor as *Dominus mundi*, and he was able to restore the unity of the Church and the Empire. At Constance, the emperor gave Brandenburg to Frederick of Hohenzollern who thereby became one of the electors — the first in the House that ruled Brandenburg, then Prussia, and finally the new German Empire, till 1918.

In Paris and London, Sigismund exercised the function of an imperial arbiter between England and France. During his reign there occurred the first religious and nationalist revolution in European history, the so-called Hussite wars, which began in Bohemia and spread like wild-fire through Brandenburg to the Baltic coast. They broke out after the Czech national leader and Church reformer, John Hus had been burned at the stake as a heretic in Constance.

A world age approached its end. Contempt for the once exalted position of the clergy became almost general. It was combined with a growing contempt for the German people. The Germans of those days are described as dumb, snoring creatures, with no mind for their one-time freedom.

But the realm of the spirit was still alive. Indeed, it found new expression in Gutenberg's invention of the printing press, in the painters Matthias Grünewald, Hans Baldung Grien, Albrecht Dürer, Lukas Cranach, Hans Holbein, and in the sculptors and woodcarvers Tilman Riemenschneider and Michael Pacher. Then it was that the face of the German cities was shaped, with their imposing town halls, the timber-framed houses of the guilds and rising middle-classes, the fountains in the public squares and market-places.

The philosophers and humanists Reuchlin and Erasmus of Rotterdam, the rebellious poet Ulrich von Hutten and the rebel-knight Franz von Sickingen were already of the new generation. "Reformation of head and members" became the battle-cry of all who were intellectually alert.

Emperor Sigismund was succeeded by his son-in-law, Albrecht of Austria of the house of Habsburg (1438—39), and, after the early



death of this brilliant prince, by the latter's cousin Emperor Frederick III (1440—93), distinguished mainly by longevity. Thus the great heritage of the house of Luxemburg now devolved on the Habsburgs, and Frederick III cultivated the art of increasing it further by well planned marriages.

Since no strong central authority was there to counterbalance it, the Curia or Papal Court well nigh assumed the rank of partner in a co-regency. It drew all secular questions before its tribunal, it handed out hundreds of German bishoprics and other spoils to Italian prelates. Also fund raising campaigns like the selling of indulgences became a cause for public scandal.

With the fall of Constantinople in 1453 the Turkish menace increased, but the Emperor proved incapable of dealing with it. Two other princes though, pressed for action — King George Podiebrad of Bohemia (1459 — 1471), a Czech nobleman who through courage and statesmanlike skill had wrestled his country's throne from the Habsburgs, and the Elector Frederick the Victorious, the Count palatine (1425—76), an outstanding ruler well versed in the arts of both peace and war. He was the grandson of the German king Ruppert III and the second founder of Heidelberg university whose statutes became a model for many other German universities. George and Frederick were allies, their minds were set on reunifying Europe with the East and liberating Constantinople. But they could not prevail against the general inertia of this emperor and the empire.

"O Germany", exclaimed the poet and humanist Sebastian Brant, "wrap thyself in mourning, for the sceptre will be taken from thy hands! Who will lend tears to my eyes to bewail the fall of the Empire?" This foreboding of approaching doom was general. Expression was also given to it by Nicolas Cusanus. "One will seek the empire among the German's", he wrote, "and will find it no longer. Strangers will come and take away our land which we ourselves divided". He suggested to strengthen the imperial authority, derived from the people, by creating a permanent diet in which the commoners, too, would be represented. All internal wars must be suppressed, a standing army at the disposal of the emperor should be created. But his warnings were in vain.

Maximilian I (1493—1529), "the last Knight" and the last emperor of a realm undivided in faith, ascended the throne in 1493, the year in which Columbus set out on the second of his voyages. He possessed a simple majesty, but not the iron grip his age required. Yet, important reforms were introduced in his reign. At the Diet of Worms in 1495 a



"Perpetual Public Peace" was proclaimed, and a supreme court which at least in theory possessed universal jurisdiction was instituted. This court completed the centuries old development of receiving Roman law into the German legal system.

In 1498 the cities were finally admitted into the imperial Diet. At the Diet of Cologne in 1512, further reforms were begun of the finances, the armed forces, and of the administration. For this purpose the Empire was divided into ten "circles", administrative regions or districts.

But by then the Empire was split up into two hundred and forty States, not counting the territories of the Reichsritter or imperial knights!

The agreements concluded by Emperor Maximilian as well as the marriages planned by him assured the house of Habsburg for a long period control over Spain and her Italian and overseas possessions, over the Netherlands and the endless expanses on the newly-discovered American continent.

Emperor Maximilian died before he could realize that the hammer strokes of an Augustinian friar, named Martin Luther, nailing his ninety five Theses on the portals of the Court Church of Wittenberg on October 31, 1517, would change the face of Germany and the world.

## VIII

### FROM THE REFORMATION TO THE 'THIRTY YEARS' WAR

That a reform of the Church had become imperative in the sixteenth century has never been denied by many Catholics, either then or today. It was to have been a reform of Church discipline, a cleansing process on the human plane — the dogma, or basic teachings, as divine were beyond human change or interference.

Also the great popes of the Renaissance, Julius II and Leo X of the Medici House realized the need for reform. In 1512, Pope Julius II sought to meet the rising demand by convoking a Church council at the Lateran. It remained in session for seven years. But neither the Emperor, nor France, nor England sent delegates. Much of the popes' attention was claimed by their great artistic creations which to this day are a marvel of the world. It was only at the Council of Trent (1545—64) that the necessary reform work was finally carried out. That this council came about and was compelled to tackle the burning problems was



due, indirectly, to Luther's forceful actions — and this undoubtedly, is one of his great historic merits.

The post-Tridentine Church, reformed and rejuvenated, cannot be compared with the state of affairs in Luther's days. This is acknowledged by Protestants, Catholics and non-believers alike.

Luther's masterful translation of the Bible gave the German people its modern common language. The fervour of religious renewal swept away indifference and kindled a new spiritual life.

The rapid progress of the "Reformation", as the Evangelical or Protestant movement was called, is also explained by prevailing political and social conditions. Since the downfall of the Hohenstaufen the German people had increasingly come to feel that Rome's interests were not theirs. It was thus a national sentiment, too, that met the Reformation half-way, a rebellion against "foreign" interests. On the other hand, the Reformation brought about a tragic split in Germany's religious unity from which it is still suffering today.

Two internal wars were shaking Germany almost simultaneously — the "War of the Knights" in 1522 and the "Peasants War" from 1523 to 1525, the first social revolutions in Central Europe.

These two estates were weighed down by social depression. The invention of fire arms and the employment of mercenaries in the service of the princes had steadily reduced the position and influence of the knights. Their former liberties had almost been crushed by the mightier lords, both lay and ecclesiastic. The peasants, who had once been free men, were reduced almost to serfdom. There was no strong central power anymore to protect them against the territorial lords and big landowners.

The peasants, the most miserable of the miserable, interpreted Luther's doctrines of "freedom in Christ" and Christian brotherhood in a revolutionary sense. Also his teachings about "universal priesthood" were understood by many as directed against the privileges of bishops, abbots and other propertied prelates. If *all* were priests, how could some place themselves above their brethren?

Even some of the princes soon began to realize that Martin Luther by attacking the universal Church had furnished them with welcome arguments for throwing off all control and reducing still further the power of that other universal institution, the empire. Ecclesiastical properties, if "secularized", would add to their own domains and increase their power over their subjects. If Church and Papacy were "evil", as



Luther taught in his later years, it was in fact a God-pleasing duty to expropriate all their possessions.

In 1519, Maximilian's young grandson, Charles V (1519—56), after shameful bargaining on the part of the German princes, was elected to the throne. The electors of Trier and Brandenburg were completely under the golden influence of King Francis I of France who aspired to be emperor himself. King Henry VIII of England also competed for the throne. In any case, the candidacy of the English and French rulers proves clearly that the German kingship was looked upon as supranational in character and integrally united to the imperial office.

It is also to be noted that "public opinion" was already a power. It favoured Charles and turned against the princes who so disgracefully exploited their electoral rights for financial gains. In the final ballot Charles was elected unanimously.

In his own territorial power Charles V surpassed all his predecessors. From his mother, Joanna, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Aragon and Castile, he had inherited the crown of Spain with its vast American dominions; he was king of Naples and Sicily, lord of the Netherlands and Burgundy and heir to all the Austrian domains of Habsburg. In 1526 and 1527, the crowns of Bohemia and Hungary fell to his brother Ferdinand; they were to remain with the house of Habsburg till 1918.

It was said that in Charles' realm, which almost spanned the world, the sun never set. But the sun of unity and faith was already low in the evening sky when the emperor hastened back from Spain to receive at Aachen the Crown of Charlemagne, of Otto the Great and his successors.

At a Diet in Worms, 1521, Luther defended his basic doctrine that man was justified by faith alone, which made the priestly office an unnecessary intermediary to God. He also upheld his "95 Theses" which had attacked the abuses of indulgences. It was a courageous speech, which has gone down in history as an example of the power of a man who would admit responsibility to his conscience alone.

Also the stand taken by Charles at that diet is fully understandable. To him, Luther was a rebel and an heretic who by denying the supreme authority of the Church in matters spiritual struck at the very foundations of the millennial order, spiritual as well as political. Inevitably, he had to put Luther and his followers under the ban of the empire, even though this by no means halted the forward march of Luther's teachings.



This entire period is a turning point in modern history. Much that happened then is still of importance today. Kindled by the revolutionary spirit of the new ideas the War of the Knights and shortly afterwards the Peasants War broke out. Their leaders aimed at restoring a strong imperial power and — quite modern in its concept — at creating a central parliament in which also the peasants were to be represented.

These peasants fought under the black-red-golden banner which in the nineteenth century was the short lived symbol of German unity, and which, after 1919, and again after the fall of Hitlerism, became the flag of the German Republic. There were not a few nobles who by conscience and a sense of duty toward the people and the empire were induced to support, even to head the peasants movement. Among them were the knights Götz von Berlichingen, immortalized by Goethe's drama, and Florian Geyer, Count Georg von Wertheim, the young Counts of Löwenstein, and others.

However, despite their strength in number, the peasants army, ill equipped and badly organized, proved unequal to the well trained armies of the princes united in the "Swabian League", and of the Landgrave Philip of Hessen, the Margrave Kasimir of Brandenburg, the Saxon princes and many others.

The Peasants War laid waste large parts of Germany, Austria, Alsace, and Switzerland. From the Rhine to the Adriatic Sea, Germany was in flames. Some charred traces can still be seen today in the "romantic" ruins of many a castle in Southern and South Western Germany.

The number of the dead, including those killed or executed in smaller uprisings, may be estimated conservatively at 200 000 — an astronomical figure especially shocking in view of the thin population of that time.

The beginning of the annexation of the German provinces of Alsace and Lorraine by France falls into the reign of Charles V. It was in 1552 that the Elector Moritz of Saxony treacherously concluded an alliance against the Emperor with King Henry II of France, handing over to him as price the towns of Metz, Toul and Verdun. They have remained French ever since, with the exception of Metz which between 1871 and 1919 was German once again. Hecatombs of Frenchmen and Germans have fallen in the dispute over these provinces.

At the same time when Germany was shaken by the Peasants War and its aftermath, it was also menaced by a French-Turkish alliance. Charles defeated the French in the battle of Pavia, in 1525, an event still



remembered in popular songs. In 1529 the Turks for the first time appeared at the gates of Vienna.

Peace between the Catholics and the adherents of the "New Creed" (called Protestantism since 1529 because of the protest of five princes and fourteen cities, among them Strassburg, Nuremberg, Ulm and Constance, against the anti-Lutheran decrees of the Diet of Worms) was signed in Augsburg, in 1555. About seven tenth of the German people had embraced Protestantism when the movement was at its pinnacle.

Already in 1525 after consulting Martin Luther at Wittenberg the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Albrecht of Brandenburg of the Hohenzollern house, had proclaimed the domains of the Order a temporal hereditary dukedom. Soon afterwards the new duke and most of his knights, again on Luther's advice, broke the vow of celibacy. Albrecht married a princess of Denmark.

Charles V was the last Emperor who was crowned by a pope in Italy, in 1530. From 1562 on Frankfurt assumed the privileges of the Italian Coronation cities.

In 1556 Charles laid down the imperial scepter and all his royal crowns. The Spanish world and Southern Italy were separated again from Germany. The imperial office went to Charles' brother Ferdinand I (1556—64), the crown of Spain with its overseas dominions in Asia and America to his son, King Philip II.

Of all the emperors, only Ferdinand's son Maximilian II (1564—76) inclined toward the New Creed, perhaps out of opposition against the richer Spanish branch of the Habsburg dynasty.

Under Emperor Rudolph II (1576—1612), Maximilian's son, the battle-lines of the approaching catastrophe, the "Thirty Years War", began to be drawn. Rudolph was a mystic who, surrounded by soothsayers, alchemists, and astronomers (among them the great Johannes Kepler, discoverer of the laws of motion in the solar system) buried himself in the Hradshin, the ancient royal castle overlooking Prague. The reins of government slipped more and more from his hands until he was emperor only on the Hradshin. His brother Matthias (1612—19) took over his powers and his lands.

In 1608, the Protestant Union was founded under the lead of the Calvinist elector palatine, Frederick V. The Catholic princes replied by forming in 1609 the Catholic League under Frederick's cousin Maximilian, duke of Bavaria. (Both were of the Wittelsbach House). In the



same year Maximilian by a Royal Charter granted free exercise of religion to the Bohemian lords, knights, and cities.

"Defenestration", throwing one's opponents out of the window from the Hradshin, seems to be a peculiar Bohemian custom. In 1419, the defenestration of the German counsellors of King Wenceslas had initiated the Hussite wars; the second one, with the imperial counsellors Martinitz and Slawata as victims, triggered the Thirty Years War. (Curiously, not only did these two men survive their defenestration, they were even among the few still alive when the war finally ended). The third defenestration at Prague in 1948, which killed the foreign minister Jan Masaryk, son of the founder and first president of Czechoslovakia sealed the Sovietization of the country.

The Thirty Years' War (1618—48) is usually referred to as a "religious" struggle. But to the powers concerned religious matters were of secondary importance. France, which under its great statesman, the Cardinal Richelieu, joined the fight openly in 1635 aimed at breaking the power of the empire and of the House of Habsburg. The main concern for the German princes, Catholic and Protestant alike, who were allied with the French Cardinal or the Protestant King of Sweden respectively was how to enlarge their personal possessions and power. For Gustavus Adolphus, finally (whom the Protestants called the "Lion of Midnight") it was less the New Creed or the suffering of his Protestant brethren that mattered. When he landed in Pomerania, at the North German coast, in 1630, he was moved by a youthful desire for glory and adventure, with the vision of a Protestant imperial crown for himself in the background.

Also Gustavus Adolphus' great adversary, Albrecht von Wallenstein, a Bohemian nobleman, soon to be a prince of the empire and duke of Friedland, was motivated by political rather than by religious considerations. A Protestant by birth, he had later embraced Catholicism and joined the emperor's cause. He, too, may have had a vision of the imperial crown, or at least, certainly, of the crown of Bohemia, as the prize for his victories. He was a statesman of European stature.

What from today's viewpoint looks like one war was really a series of regional conflicts, all interlocking. Several phases are distinguishable. The first is called the "Bohemian period" (1618—25) beginning with the election of the Elector Palatine Frederick V as king of Bohemia, the "Winter King" as he is called in history. In 1620, in the battle of Bila Hora (White Hill) he lost his crown when he was defeated by the



combined armies of Maximilian of Bavaria and the Habsburgs and placed under the ban of the empire. The electoral dignity of the Rhine was transferred to Bavaria with its duke Maximilian now becoming a prince elector. In Bohemia, mass expropriations created Czech national resentment which survived the centuries and contributed to the breaking up of the Habsburg empire in 1918, when an independent Czechoslovakia was created.

The "Danish Period" (1625—29) ended with the Peace of Lübeck between the Emperor and King Christian IV of Denmark. In the same year of 1629 Emperor Ferdinand II (1619—37), ignoring the advice of his great general Wallenstein, whose star had begun to rise in 1624 as commander of an imperial army recruited by himself, issued the "Edict of Restitution". All ecclesiastic estates confiscated since 1552 were to be restored. This made a reconciliation between the emperor and the Protestant part of Germany practically impossible. A year later the emperor yielded to the princes, led by the Elector Maximilian and dismissed Wallenstein — shortly before Gustavus Adolphus, the Empire's most dangerous enemy, landed in Pomerania. Wallenstein had foreseen this danger for years.

This intervention opened the "Swedish Period" (1630—35). The important battles, both in 1631, were the capture (and destruction) of Magdeburg by the imperial fieldmarshal Count Tilly, and the battle of Leipzig and Breitenfeld. Here Gustavus won a brilliant victory over Tilly, who until then had never known defeat, and he advanced to the Rhine and up to Southern Germany. His ally, Duke Bernhard of Saxony — Weimar, captured Prague. Munich was taken, the Alpine passes were undefended, Italy, Rome itself lay open to the victorious march of the new "King of the Goths" (such was one of Gustavus Adolphus titles).

In this hour of utter need, Ferdinand recalled Wallenstein and vested him with extraordinary powers. Quickly he recaptured Prague and drove the Saxons out of Bohemia. In the same year the two great men, Wallenstein and the Swedish king, met in battle, at Lützen, November 6th, 1632. The Swedes were victorious, but their king was killed. His chancellor, Axel Oxenstierna, took over the conduct of Swedish foreign policy, while Duke Bernhard of Weimar, together with two Swedish generals, was placed at the helm of the Swedish forces.

Even after the death of Gustavus Adolphus, warfare continued to ravage Europe. Children were born and grew up never knowing peace, familiar only with the stench of burning houses, the roar of murderers



and the cries of their victims. Depravity, famine, and the plague came as the horsemen of the Apocalypse. Packs of wolves descended on the deserted German settlements and long after the original cause of the great war had been forgotten soldiers of all nations still flocked to the ever-charging colours.

The only man that could have brought about an earlier end of the holocaust, Wallenstein, was deposed again in 1634 and murdered shortly afterwards at Eger in Bohemia. The Emperor may not have ordered this atrocious deed, but he rewarded the assassins with honours and riches.

The final phase is known as the "French-Swedish period" (1635—48). Already in 1630, Catholic France had begun to render financial support to the protestant king of Sweden. France was able to reap rich profit from her intervention in favour of "liberty for German Protestantism".

For five years peace negotiations dragged on in the Westfalian towns of Münster and Osnabrück. Finally, when exhaustion was complete, peace came. It brought religious freedom also for the Calvinist branch of Protestantism, but it also confirmed the infamous *ius reformandi*, namely, the "right" of the territorial lords to decide which religion their subjects must follow.

Germany lost forty thousand square miles of her territory. France gained a dominant position in Alsace-Lorraine, which in 1681 enabled King Louis XIV to occupy and annex Strassburg, the last free imperial city there. Sweden entrenched itself in Northern Germany. Switzerland and the Netherlands seceded from the Empire. The German princes and territorial lords were given the rights of "sovereignty", even the right to conclude alliances not only with one another but with foreign powers. The restrictive clause that such alliances must not be directed against empire and emperor had little practical meaning. Three hundred and fifty nearly independent German "fatherlands" began to develop, "independent", however, not so much from foreign powers, than with regard to the empire.

The masses of impoverished peasants were swelled by the impoverished burghers whose homes had been destroyed, and by the hordes of former mercenaries who, years after the end of the war, still roamed the countryside, with robbery and pillage as their only means of support.

The human story of these times is told with great dramatic power in "Simplicius Simplicissimus", the first important novel in the German language, by Christoffel von Grimmelshausen. It is the story of a young



boy kidnapped by soldiers and of his adventures during that lawless period.

Another remarkable figure of the time was the poet Friedrich von Spee (1591—1635), a Jesuit priest. His lyrics have survived to the present. He was the first who courageously attacked one of the fiercest aberrations of the human mind, the witch trials. It is largely due to his efforts that they were finally abolished, among Catholics and Protestants alike. Spee can justly be called one of the fathers of modern criminal legislation.

Yet, inspite of these men, the development of German literature was greatly retarded by the spiritual and physical devastations of the war. While in France the classic age of literature begins in the seventeenth century, German literature did not unfold till the later part of the eighteenth. The German language itself degenerated, becoming permeated with foreign words. The educated classes spoke French, the scholars wrote in Latin.

When in 1687 the philosopher Christian Thomasius at the University of Leipzig announced that he would henceforth lecture in German, this caused a scandal among his colleagues who considered that language unfit for scholarly use.

A memory of the horrors of the Thirty Years has lingered on in the minds of the people. To this day, whenever a period of suffering or misery seems at hand, the expression is used, "like in the Thirty Years War".

And yet, inspite of the abomination of devastation, the timeless idea of a European commonwealth remained alive, then still symbolized in the imperial crown. It also survived in the hearts of men who were suffering and yearning for peace and justice, and in the realm of the spirit.

Only fifteen years after the Thirty Years War, in 1663, a new wave of Turkish armies swept against the depopulated empire. Twenty years later they stood for the second time at the gates of Vienna which was heroically defended by its citizens. In the battle at the Kahlenberg, in 1683, a European army under the leadership of King John Sobieski of Poland and Duke Charles of Lorraine broke the siege and liberated Vienna. It was Austria which for the next generations was called upon by history to defend and renew the Occidental commonwealth.



## IX

## AUSTRIA AND PRUSSIA

In practice, though never constitutionally, the imperial crown had become hereditary in the House of Habsburg. Ferdinand II was followed by his son, Emperor Ferdinand III (1637—57), under whom the Thirty Years War was brought to a close, while the name of his grandson, Emperor Leopold I (1658—1705), is linked with the defensive victories of the Empire against the Turks. At that time Austria became one of the great European powers.

In 1683, when the Turks invested Vienna for the second time, the *Reichstag*, or Diet of the Empire, (in which, incidentally, the free city republics were also represented), was convened in Regensburg. Because of the persistent danger from the East, the Diet remained in permanent session until the end of the Empire in 1806.

King Louis XIV of France (1643—1715) was in alliance with the Turks, as other French kings had been before him. He and his First Minister, Cardinal Mazarin, continued Richelieu's policy also in regard to Germany. After the occupation of Strassburg in 1681, France extended its domination over Western and Southwestern Germany. In the Treaty of Ryswick of 1697, some of these conquests were regained after prolonged fighting, with victories and defeats changing over the years. Also in the Netherlands Louis gained a strong position.

Defensive warfare against the King's aggressions taxed the forces of Europe in their desperate struggle against the Turks. But in that hour of need Europe had become mindful once more of its common cause. Men of many nations rallied to the imperial banner which was carried now by Austria.

It was Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663—1736), of Italian descent and a nephew of Cardinal Mazarin, who became the saviour of the empire and the occident. He is still remembered in a popular song that glorifies the *Edle Ritter*, the Noble Knight. He was equally great as a statesman, a strategist, and a leader of men. His beautiful palace Belvedere in Vienna, which has survived the bombings of the second world war, is a tribute to his artistic taste. Unaffected by the frivolous regime of mistresses and the petty-coat worship of his age, he was in this akin to King Frederick the Great of Prussia whom he had met, and in whom he had recognized the spark of the genius, when Frederick was still crown prince.



Eugene was the revered leader of his soldiers, a knightly figure who realized the need for a thorough reform of Germany's political constitution. With a clear understanding for the significance of the rising Brandenburg-Prussian power in northern Germany, he planned a firm union between the Habsburg and the Hohenzollern spheres of dominion.

What was sorely needed at that time was a modernisation of German political life. Germany's constitution was aptly described as a "unique monstrosity" by the most eminent teacher of constitutional and international law of his time, Baron Samuel von Pufendorf, professor at the University of Heidelberg (1632—94). He was among the first to recognize the need for federal associations between the states and nations in order to modernize the occidental commonwealth. Some of the ideas of the League of Nations of 1919, the United Nations of 1945, and most recent developments for a Common Market and political union in Europe were anticipated by him. He also advocated arbitration and mediation to maintain international peace. Pufendorf's writings on the natural equality of men had a direct bearing on the French Revolution with its "Declaration of the Rights of Man" of August 1789. He may also be called one of the fathers of modern constitutional law who, earlier than Montesquieu in his famous work on "The Spirit of Laws", advocated the principle of division of power which is today the very basis of most modern constitutions.

By the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, Prince Eugene of Savoy secured the liberation of the major part of Hungary from Ottoman rule. The "Crown of St. Stephen" passed once more to the male line of the Habsburgs, to remain there till 1918. Also Croatia, Slovenia and Transsylvania came under Habsburg rule. With the fall of Belgrade in 1717, wholly an achievement of Prince Eugene, a historic period came to its close. In the following year, the peace treaty of Passarowitz was concluded with the Ottoman Empire. In spite of a few later encounters (as those from 1736—39), this treaty laid the foundation for a new relationship between these two powerful states. It was also the first step toward the development of friendship between Germany and modern Turkey.

Eugene also reorganized the affairs of Upper Italy and warded off French invasions in the West. His victories in the Spanish War of Succession (1701—14) as a comrade-in-arms of the Duke of Marlborough (Winston Churchill's ancestor) won him undying glory. This was actually another European-wide war with the theatre of action being much larger than during the Thirty Years War.



Charles II, the last Habsburg king on the Spanish throne, was without issue. Even before his death in 1700, several claimants to his enormous dominions in Europe and America appeared on the plane. Of these, Joseph Ferdinand, the young electoral prince of Bavaria, died before the Spanish king, and thus there remained Duke Philip of Anjou, grandson of Louis XIV and of an older sister of Charles II; and Emperor Leopold I, head of the German branch of the Habsburg dynasty. He, as well as Louis XIV, were cousins of Charles II, all three being grandsons of Philip III of Spain (d. 1621). As Leopold's eldest son Joseph I was to succeed him as emperor (1705—11), he claimed the Spanish inheritance for his younger son, Archduke Charles.

It is obvious that the passing of the Spanish monarchy into the hands either of the Bourbons of France, or the Habsburgs, was a matter of major concern to all Europe.

Holland and at first also England, which opposed a union between the Spanish and the French crowns, stood on the side of Austria and the Empire. In 1704 the British, with the help of German soldiers took Gibraltar. Within the empire, the Elector of Bavaria and the Archbishop-Elector of Cologne sided with France, while Prussia joined the emperor. The Prussians, under the leadership of Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, contributed much to Prince Eugene's victory at Turin (1706), which opened Lombardy to the imperial forces.

Marlborough and Eugene as joint commanders won the battles of Höchstädt and Blenheim (1704). Marlborough's victory at Ramillies in 1706 led to the submission of Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, Ostend and other cities. Another joint victory was won at Oudenaarde. Peace negotiations, however, were broken off when the allies demanded of Louis XIV that he himself should chase his own grandson out of Spain.

In 1709, at Malplaquet, Marlborough and Eugene once more defeated the French. It was the bloodiest battle of the war, a "butchery", as it was called in England. The allies lost twenty thousand men. This terrific loss led to the overthrow of the liberal "Whigs" in 1710, bringing Marlborough's conservative "Tory" enemies to power. In the following year Emperor Joseph died without issue, whereby Charles, claimant to the Spanish throne, became heir to the Empire and all of the Habsburg possessions.

This event radically changed British policy. For now it was feared in England that the union between the Empire, the Habsburg possessions and the vast Spanish world might renew the empire of Charles V and threaten Britain's domination over the seas. Deserting her former



allies, England concluded the Treaty of Utrecht with France in 1713. It recognized the Bourbon succession in Spain, with the provision that the French and the Spanish crowns should remain separated for ever. This treaty netted huge territorial gains for England in the New World. France had to cede Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. Spain agreed to the British possession of Gibraltar and Minorca. Austria was to receive the Spanish appanages, the Netherlands, Milan, Naples and Sardinia.

In 1714, by the Treaty of Rastatt, the Empire, too, concluded peace with France, without recognizing the Bourbon succession in Spain.

Emperor Charles VI (1711—40), the former claimant to the Spanish throne, was the last male Habsburg. In 1713 he established a new order of succession called the *Pragmatic Sanction*, providing for his daughter Maria Theresia to inherit the Austrian possessions. In protracted negotiations he secured the assent of the European powers. As a price for England's acquiescence Austria had to yield its flourishing trade with East India.

While Austria's attention was turning more and more toward Eastern and South Eastern Europe, the political centre inside Germany shifted to the North, to Brandenburg-Prussia. In 1618, the Brandenburg line of the Hohenzollern inherited the Duchy of Prussia at the death of Duke Albrecht Frederick, the last descendent of the last grandmaster of the Teutonic Order.

The first important statesman of the new power in northern Germany was Frederick William I (1640—88), called the "Great Elector". When he succeeded his father George William in 1640, his domains were ravaged by war. They consisted of disjointed provinces: Prussia (roughly the modern province of East Prussia) in the northeast, the margraviate of Brandenburg, without access to the sea, and some counties and minor dominions on the Weser river and in the Rhineland. During his reign he added to this Pomerania (reconquered from Sweden) with its long Baltic coast line, and the ancient city of Magdeburg. The territory of the state was still spread out over the map of Northern Germany, disconnected and without natural borders. But by its exemplary administration and well organized military power it had been consolidated.

The guiding example in these reforms was Maurice of Orange, (uncle of the great Elector's Wife, Louise Henriette) the first prince to train a reliable officers' corps whose members had to learn Latin, geometry, arithmetic, and the outlines of the science of strategy.

When in 1685 Louis XIV revoked the "Edict of Nantes" of 1598 by which Henry IV, the first Bourbon on the French throne, had



guaranteed freedom of religion to the French Calvinists, or Huguenots, the Great Elector opened his lands to the refugees. Brilliant civil servants, officers, and poets, industrious and capable craftsmen, manufacturers and artisans sprang from this French stock, to the lasting benefit of Brandenburg-Prussia and all Germany. One third of the population of Berlin, then a city of twenty thousand souls, was at the time French. The *Französische Dom*, the French calvinist cathedral, and the *Französische Gymnasium*, a French language high school and junior college, one of the best in Germany which, despite the many Franco-German conflicts, has never closed its doors, still testify to the spirit of tolerance of historic Prussia.

The administration and judiciary system of the state became models of efficiency and justice. They were incorrupt, impartial and just.

In 1701 the son of the Great Elector, Frederick III (1688—1713), a supporter of Emperor Leopold I, crowned himself King in the city of Königsberg. He had received the emperors's consent to call himself "Frederick I, King in Prussia", but it was only under his successor, Frederick William I, (1713—40) that "Prussia" became the official designation for the whole of the State. Under that ruler, known as the "soldiers' king", the Prussian army grew from 38 000 to 83 000 men, but he was too fond of his soldiers to expose them to the dangers of war. A frugal and efficient administrator, he was loyal to the empire and to Emperor Charles VI.

Because of his soberness and austerity in the midst of the luxuries and waste of public funds common among the princes of the late Baroque, Frederick William has been much maligned. He was called despotic, even barbarous, without a sense for beauty and refinement. Yet, despite his rigid discipline which led to an almost fatal conflict between him and his son, the future Frederick the Great, he had a secret passion for painting, in which he displayed taste and understanding. He preferred the Dutch masters to the sugary style of his contemporaries.

Under his reign, Prussia became the first German state to abolish witch trials. He perfected the Prussian administration with its incorruptible civil service and independent courts of law. But his personal happiness he sacrificed to the mission laid upon him by history — to prepare the path for his great son, Frederick II (1740—1786), who might never have attained to fame had it not been for the solid foundations laid by his stern father.

When Frederick succeeded to the throne, Prussia was still far removed



from playing a role of real importance within the concert of the Great Powers of Europe, the Habsburgs, the Bourbons, and Britain, to which recently Russia had joined herself, modernized and westernized by Tsar Peter the Great (1689—1725).

Half a year later the last Habsburg, Charles VI, died. In his hereditary domains he was succeeded, by virtue of the Pragmatic Sanction, by his daughter Maria Theresia (1740—80). Although all European states, with the exception of Bavaria, had finally recognized her right of succession, war broke out at once, called the Austrian War of Succession (1740—48). Maria Theresia, a remarkable woman and a great ruler who is still remembered by the people in Austria, was able to maintain herself.

That King Frederick, whose house owed much to the Habsburgs, should side against Maria Theresia was perhaps the greatest shock. As a pretext he used certain claims, not any too sound legally, on the Austrian provinces of Silesia. In alliance with France and the Wittelsbachs of Bavaria he won this rich province in the First Silesian War (1740—42), terminated by the Treaties of Berlin and Breslau.

In 1742, the Elector of Bavaria was elected Roman Emperor and German King. As Charles VII he ruled till 1745, the first non-Habsburg in centuries, and the last one too, to be elevated to the imperial office.

Frederick of Prussia, worried about Maria Theresia's quick political recovery, began the "Second Silesian War" in 1744. His pretext was the support which he, as a prince of the empire, owed to Emperor Charles VII.

This war consolidated Frederick's European position. The peace treaty of Dresden in 1745 left him with the possession of Silesia. In turn, Charles VII having died in 1745, he recognized Maria Theresia's husband, Duke Francis-Stephen of Lorraine, as Emperor Francis I (1745—65).

Maria Theresia never forgave the loss of Silesia. Since France, too, was uneasy about the rising power of her Prussian ally, this helped to overcome the traditional rivalry between the Bourbons and the Habsburgs. A "diplomatic revolution" occurred, a reversal of alliances. France and Austria became allies, joined by Russia under the Tsarina Elizabeth (1741—62), a personal enemy of Frederick. England, on the other hand, in personal union with Hanover, concluded the treaty of Westminster (1756) with the Prussian king. The majority of the princes of the Empire sided against Frederick.

The "Seven Years War" (1756—63) which ensued from this, was



again a world war. It was fought in Europe, but also in North America and India — there as a colonial war between the French and the British. Its outcome determined the fate of these wide territories for the next centuries. At sea, the "Seven Years War" was fought all over the world.

Frederick was supported by British subsidies and the British Hanoverian army. His victories over the French, notably in the battle of Rossbach on November 5, 1757, a strategic feat of Caesarian magnitude, won Canada for the British and helped to drive the French from southern India. Only one month after Rossbach Frederick routed the superior Austrian army at Leuthen. In the following year, Frederick defeated the Russian invaders in the great battle of Zorndorf. The victory in the battle of Minden, 1759, won by Frederick's ally, Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick over the French, ranks high in British and North American history. Rossbach and Minden are mile stones in the development of the British empire.

Frederick knew not only how to conquer but also how to suffer and to survive defeats, some of which would have crushed a lesser man — Kolin (1757) and Hochkirch (1758) at the hands of the Austrians, and, worst of all, Kunersdorf (1759) against the combined might of the Austrians and the Russians. In 1760 Berlin was taken by surprise and burned by the Russians. They retreated hurriedly when Frederick hastened to the rescue.

After Kunersdorf, Frederick had declared "Everything is lost. I shall not survive the downfall of my country". And this was not the only time when the end seemed at hand. Yet again and again Frederick extracted himself from apparently hopeless situations, unbroken in spirit, undefeated in his will to survive.

In 1760 British subsidies were stopped. Soon after the accession of King George III, (1760—1820), under whom England's American colonies gained independence, the English began negotiations with France. In 1763 England concluded the separate Treaty of Paris with France and Spain, France's ally since 1761. This treaty brought Britain almost to the summit of its power and territorial expansion.

Frederick, in his lone, desperate fight for survival was saved by what he himself called "the miracle of the House of Brandenburg" — the death, in 1762, of his most bitter personal enemy, Tsarina Elizabeth. Her nephew and successor Peter III, Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, was an admirer of Frederick who at once concluded an armistice with him. In the Treaty of St. Petersburg, Russia returned all conquests to Prussia and renounced all hostile alliances. Even though Peter III was soon



deposed by his wife, Catherine the Great, a German princess of Anhalt-Zerbst, tsarina from 1762 to 1796, who recalled her troops from Frederick's army, the situation had changed fundamentally.

In 1763 peace finally came. The Treaty of Hubertusburg ratified the treaties of Berlin, Breslau and Dresden. In turn, Frederick pledged to give his electoral vote to Maria Theresia's son Joseph, after the death of the Emperor Francis I.

In the First Partition of Poland in 1772 (the second one came 1793, the third and final one in 1795), Frederick acquired a new province. Under Prussian administration, its economic and cultural decay was overcome within a few years. Yet, the historic guilt incurred by Russia, Austria and Prussia in dividing up that ancient country is undeniable. Maria Theresia, with her strong sense of justice agreed only reluctantly, predicting fateful consequences for the Austrian Monarchy and all other participants in these unjust acts. The "Polish question" has remained a sore point of European politics ever since, until Poland gained her independence in 1919 and even to this day.

The English historian Thomas Carlyle has called Frederick "the Crowned Reality". To Louis XIV absolutistic devise "L'Etat c'est moi!" (The State am I) Frederick countered "The sovereign is the first servant of the state". On the third day after his accession to the throne he abolished torture, which was then still generally accepted as a means of criminal procedure. He also abolished censorship of the press. In religious matters he was an example of tolerance. "In my States everyone shall attain to salvation in his own fashion", he said.

Frederick the Great has been hailed as a brilliant strategist, ranking with Caesar and Napoleon. But his achievements as a legislator and administrator are just as remarkable. He created an incorrupt system of professional judges and civil servants, whose recompense was greater honour rather than monetary gain. A general codification of civil, administrative and criminal law, the *Allgemeines Landrecht für die Preussischen Staaten*, was begun on his initiative, with an admonition to the jurists that they should order everything "according to reason, justice, and equity". Carefully worded articles defined and limited the power of the state and the authority of the police — something indeed worthy of note in that period of absolutism. These articles remained in force until in 1931 the German Republic replaced them with more modern formulations. On the foundation laid by Frederick the *Rechtsstaat*, or state of law of today has developed.

According to the judgment of Wolfgang von Goethe, truly a cosmopoli-



tan mind, Frederick's personality and heroic deeds gave to German poetry a decisive impulse, awakening it from an almost lethal slumber into which it had fallen due to the devastation of the Thirty Years War. Frederick was to Goethe the "polar star, who seemed to turn about himself Germany, Europe and the whole world". And no less a man than Immanuel Kant, the philosopher of reason, bestowed upon Frederick the epithet "the Great" in 1784. So well did this express the judgement of history that this title of honour became generally accepted.

Joseph II (1765—90), the "high-souled Emperor", as the British historian G. P. Gooch has called him, was among Frederick's greatest admirers. Inspired by his example Joseph, too, attempted to modernize the administration and legislation of the Empire and the Habsburg domains. In Frederick's spirit he issued a Patent of Tolerance in 1781, granting freedom of religion to all creeds and confessions. Joseph also abolished serfdom in the crown domains. His reforms were almost revolutionary, aiming to break the power of the privileged classes, the clergy and the nobility. Once again in the twilight of the empire was there an emperor conscious of the tribunician-republican origins of his office as protector of the people.

It is regrettable that the enlightened emperor and the great king could not find a common platform for the good of the empire. They stood at odds when after the extinction of the Bavarian branch of the Wittelsbachs (in 1777) Joseph wanted to acquire Bavaria for Austria. To forestall such an increase in Habsburg power, Frederick in 1785 (one year before his death) founded the "League of the German Princes", pledged not to suffer any change of territory or transfer of sovereignty in Germany.

Some of Joseph's reforms were too hasty and had to be abandoned, yet they gave to the Austrian Monarchy a new vitality. In the minds of the people his name has survived to this day as a "people's emperor", a pioneer of progressive and constitutional government.



## X

## THE SECOND FALL OF THE EMPIRE

The French Revolution, which after a protracted period of popular grievances broke out with the storming of the Bastille in Paris on July 14, 1789, had its bearing also on the course of German history. Many German thinkers and poets of the time hailed it as an event of world historic importance, among them Immanuel Kant, Lessing, Herder and Fichte. Goethe remained sceptical, but he too realized that here (to use his own words) "a new era in the world's history has begun".

In evaluating contemporary reactions to the French Revolution, it must not be overlooked that it advanced a program of world revolution which menaced the foundations of all existing order. Almost everywhere in Europe there were (to use some modern expressions) "fifth columns" and "fellow travellers" at work. The American Revolutionary Wars and the Declaration of Independence of July 4, 1776 had been an inspiration to the French — with one important difference. Whereas the Americans professed faith in inalienable rights with which "all men have been endowed by their Creator", the basic philosophy of the French Revolution was agnostic, if not atheist.

This Fifth Column prepared the way for the victories of the French armies, until it became apparent that the ideology of "Freedom, Equality, and Fraternity" had merely helped to establish French national hegemony. But even then did it lend a special flavour to the fight for liberation. Foreign domination was to be thrown off, but the progressive ideas associated with the French Revolution were to be preserved.

The concept of "Nation", alien to historic Europe, is a child of the French Revolution, and so is "nationalism" as a means and goal of power politics. Even in Germany, which due to her history and decentralized structure had preserved much more of her supranational heritage, national feelings were stirred under the influence of events in France. At the same time, the spirit of cosmopolitanism survived to which Goethe for one, remained devoted all his life. Also the philosopher and educator Johann Gottlieb Fichte, the statesman and scholar Wilhelm von Humboldt, the writers Herder and Lessing, while moving toward a more national concept never abandoned the wider cosmopolitan ideal.

Immanuel Kant's cosmopolitan-national synthesis is perhaps most interesting. Teaching at the University of Königsberg in East Prussia he



established the "categoric imperative of duty" as the guiding principle of ethical behavior. He has been called the philosopher of Prussian state ethos. But in his treatise "On Perpetual Peace", published 1795, he also advocates the ideal of a universal League of Nations, a "World Republic" embracing the whole human family. This work is still of timely importance.

By then Germany had recovered from the spiritual and material devastations of the Thirty Years War. While the empire declined, the German spirit blossomed forth once more in full strenght. Wolfgang von Goethe's (1749—1832) dramatic works — "Faust", "Iphigenie", "Egmont" an many others — made German classics rank with the leading spirits of Europe. And there are Friedrich von Schiller (1759 — 1805), a dramatic genius aglowing with love for freedom, the dramatist Heinrich von Kleist (1777—1811), the lyric poet Friedrich Hölderlin (1770—1843), "a Hellenic spirit in a German body", as he was called, and there is Novalis (1772—1801), the "king of the Romantics". His hymns are filled with an almost exuberant longing for the union with the divine, opening once more, at the threshold of the modern age, the "inward path". Politically, in his treatise "Christendom or Europe", Novalis postulated "a new commonwealth — Europe, a state above all states".

The masterful translations of Shakespeare's works by Friedrich Schlegel and Ludwig Tieck, still used on the German stage today, made Germany receptive to the genius of English literature. The philosophers Kant († 1804), Schelling († 1854), Schopenhauer († 1860); the musicians Johann Sebastian Bach († 1750), Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart († 1791), Joseph Haydn († 1809), Ludwig van Beethoven († 1827) all have given expression to the timeless genius of mankind and carried the German name across the face of the carth.

Joseph II was succeeded by his brother, Emperor Leopold II (1790 — 1792). He, too, was inspired by the example of Frederick the Great in his endeavors to reform the administration and social structure of his domains.

Leopold's son and sucessor, Francis II († 1835) was the last Roman-German Emperor. In 1804 he detached his hereditary domains from the Empire, calling himself from now on "Francis I, Emperor of Austria". This was an act of treason, perpetrated by the holder of the supreme office, who was pledged to maintain the security and integrity of the empire.

The War of the First Coalition (1792—97) against France failed be-



cause Europe had little to put up against the élan of the revolutionary armies. Prussia withdrew from the war in 1795. In a separate peace treaty at Basel it even gave its consent to the annexation of the whole Left Bank of the Rhine by France.

This was the time when the star of the new Caesar began to rise. In 1796, Napoleon Bonaparte, twenty seven years old, defeated the Austrian army at Lodi, took Milan and the whole of Lombardy as far as Mantua. He triumphed at Arcole, at Rivoli, and wherever he met his enemies.

In 1797, France and Austria concluded a preliminary peace at Leoben, followed by the Peace of Campo Formio. Austria ceded its Belgian provinces to France, received Venetia up to the Adige river and agreed to the cession of the Left Bank to France.

The War of the Second Coalition (1799—1802) was largely the doing of Tsar Paul I of Russia (1796—1801), within an alliance that embraced Russia, England, Austria, Naples, Portugal, and the Ottoman Empire. Napoleon Bonaparte did not return from his Egyptian campaign till October 1799. Meanwhile some victories were gained by the Austrians and the Russians.

Matters changed when Bonaparte, since his *coup d'état* of November 9, 1799 (18 Brumaire according to the revolutionary calendar), "First Consul" with dictatorial powers, was again at the helm.

The Peace Treaty of Lunéville of February 9, 1801 practically dissolved the Holy Roman Empire, which had to agree to the cession of the Left Bank of the Rhine to France. Germany lost three and a half million souls. The German princes whose territories had been annexed by the French were to be "recompensated" with domains east of the Rhine, and for this purpose an Enactment by the Delegates of the Empire (Reichsdeputations-Hauptschluß) did away with most of the ecclesiastical estates in 1803. Also, of forty eight free cities only six were left (Hamburg, Lübeck, Bremen, Frankfurt, Augsburg, and Nuremberg). Four new electors were created, when soon there would be no Roman-German Emperor left to be elected.

In France, Napoleon I, Emperor of the French, superseded the decaying Republic. In Notre Dame de Paris on December 2, 1804 he crowned himself and the Empress Josephine — the first self-coronation since that of Frederick II in Jerusalem, in 1229. The spirit of Alexander and of Caesar seemed reborn in the Frankish-Roman emperor, who was also king of Italy and adorned with the Iron Crown of the Lombards in Milan, in 1805.

Even if the glory of his military victories should fade, there will



remain, engraved in the tables of human progress, the great Codes of Law, which rightly bear Napoleon's name. The Civil Code, which was also introduced in Southwestern and Western Germany, remained in force there till 1900.

At Austerlitz, in 1805 (the "Battle of the three Emperors") Napoleon completely defeated the combined Russian and Austrian armies. It was the day of the first anniversary of his coronation. In the ensuing Treaty of Pressburg, Austria ceded its Italian domains to the Napoleonic kingdom of Italy. It also lost its lands in southern Germany and in the Tirol, which went to Bavaria and Württemberg, now elevated to the ranks of kingdoms by the grace of Napoleon, as well as to Baden, now a grand duchy.

While residing in the Habsburg imperial palace of Schönbrunn near Vienn, Napoleon with a stroke of his pen toppled the Bourbons from the throne of Naples. In their stead Joseph Bonaparte, elder brother of the emperor, became king of Naples, soon to be succeeded by Joachim Murat, Napoleon's brother-in-law, when Joseph took over the kingdom of Spain.

With Napoleon as "protector", a Confederation of the Rhine was established in July 1806. Except Austria, Prussia, Brunswick, and Electoral Hesse all German states joined. Thereby a large part of Germany indirectly came under French domination. In 1810, Holland, the north German provinces of Oldenburg and East Friesland, and the Hanseatic cities of Hamburg and Bremen were incorporated into the French empire, which now reached across the Elbe to Travemünde on the Baltic Sea.

On August 6, 1806, Emperor Francis laid down the crown of Charlemagne and Otto the Great, and declared the Empire "dissolved". A millenium of world history had come to an unworthy end.

The man to whom Prussia, and eventually all Germany, owed their recovery from utter humiliation was the Reichsfreiherr (imperial baron) Heinrich Friedrich Karl vom und zum Stein (1757—1831). He realized that Prussia "had fallen asleep on the laurels of Frederick the Great". Under Frederick's nephew and successor, King Frederick William II (1786—97), the exemplary Prussian administration had deteriorated. The state was overcentralized, the peasants depressed, the citizens without civic pride. The army had become inefficient, its training antiquated.

Stein came from the Rhineland. He belonged to the estate of the "free, imperial knights" who were subject to none but the Emperor, the



revolutionary class of the Knights War. Although the country had been broken up into countless principalities all claiming loyalty from their subjects, he knew only one fatherland, Germany. He had no use for all these sub-fatherlands and their dynastic lords, whom he called the "Thirtysix petty despots", or just "the chieftains".

For Stein, the duty of the state did not exhaust itself in promoting material wealth, the main object of government was on a religious and moral plane. In his famous "Nassau Memorandum", in 1807, he wrote:

"If the nation is to be uplifted, the oppressed part of it must be given liberty, independence, property and the protection of the laws." Liberating industry of unnecessary controls, emancipating the peasants, rekindling civic pride, and granting the widest possible measure of self-government were his aims. Stein believed in the obligation of the state to protect the weaker classes.

But Stein was conscious also of the universal heritage of the commonwealth of nations. Therefore he pleaded not for Germany only but for other oppressed nations as well. He aimed at restoring a Polish state. Even on his deathbed, the news of the Polish rebellion still filled him with passion and sympathy. "My God", he exclaimed, rousing himself from a coma, "here I lie prostrate while they are fighting in Poland!".

It is characteristic of Stein that he should have named as the most promising achievements of his age, the independence of the United States, the creation of the Latin American Republics, the liberation of Greece, and the settling of Australia.

Stein joined the Prussian civil service in 1780, because he recognized Prussia's potential importance for the future. This state, composed of many different provinces and inhabited by parts of many German tribes, was in itself a miniature Germany. In 1804, he was appointed Minister of State (prime minister) and at once submitted to King Frederick William III (1797—1840) plans for a thorough reorganization of the state. But it was too late. In the battle of Jena and Auerstädt, on October 14, 1806, Napoleon administered a crushing defeat to Frederick's the Great once so glorious army, which practically desintegrated. Most of the fortresses surrendered ignominiously, by the end of October Napoleon took up residence in Berlin. In May and June of the following year he had reached Danzig, Königsberg and the Niemen. There he concluded a treaty with his former enemy, Tsar Alexander I of Russia (1801 to 1825), which saved the Prussian state from extinction.

On a raft on the River Niemen, Napoleon, Alexander, and Frederick William met to sign the Treaties of Tilsit — very harsh treaties indeed.



Prussia lost all lands between Rhine and Elbe, the Prussian province of Westphalia, turned into a kingdom, was given to Napoleon's youngest brother Jerome. The territories once taken from Poland were set up as a French-controlled Duchy of Warsaw. Prussia was thus reduced from ninety thousand to forty six thousand square miles, and on the rump state there was placed a crushing burden of reparation payments and the support of an army of occupation of 150 000 men.

From Berlin, Napoleon had decreed the "Continental System"; i. e. a blockade of the British Isles and the closure of the Continent to British trade.

Shortly after Jena, King Frederick William III dismissed Stein, calling him a "rebellious, arrogant, and disobedient servant who, swollen with his genius and talent, was far from desiring the good of the state but was rather guided by caprice, acting only out of passion, personal hatred, and spite". Actually, the minister had aroused the ire of the reactionary landed gentry who identified their selfish interests with the good of the state.

But after Tilsit Frederick William was compelled to recall Stein, interestingly enough upon the request of Napoleon himself. The French emperor considered Stein the only man capable of bringing to the chaotic Prussian state a sufficient degree of order to meet reparation payments.

Loyally Stein undertook this task. But when he recognized that such a course would lead nowhere, that Napoleonic France was bent on a gradual strangulation of all autonomous national forces, he began to look for means and alliances that would help in throwing off the foreign yoke. The emancipation of the people, always his cherished aim, now assumed a new aspect, for only a free people would be able to fight bravely. The prize of victory ought to be not only national freedom, but also liberation from oppression at home as well.

By the famous edict of October 9, 1807, all servitude was abolished. The last feudal distinctions between the property of nobles and that of commoners were erased. Serfs on public as well as private domains were to become free farmers and owners of their land.

Soon afterwards, Stein published the first official promise of a representative constitution. The absolutistic Cabinet of the King was transformed into a Ministry of State with five departments — Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs, War, Finance, and Justice.

Stein's main legislative work the *Städteordnung*, or statute for the towns and cities, was published in 1808. It is rightly called the "Magna Carta of civic freedom of the Prussian and German cities". An un-



precedented system of self-government was here created, transforming the cities into autonomous communities. By making the citizens partake in local government Stein intended to kindle anew their spirit of civic responsibility.

Stein's *Städteordnung* has survived all storms and changes of the generations. Even during the years of the Hitler regime, democratic resistance was strongest in the cities, and to this day civic pride and love of liberty among the undaunted Berliners, for example, bear witness to Stein's genius.

During the short period of time allotted to him, Stein also laid the foundations for a new statute for the provinces and rural communes, again providing for a large measure of selfgovernment and decentralization. Thereby Prussia, also in the opinion of foreign observers, developed into an example for self administration and was soon to become the most modern state in Europe.

Stein's work was completed by his successor, the State Chancellor Prince Karl August von Hardenberg.

Stein wanted the kingdom of Prussia to blend into Germany; he desired the restoration of the Empire, not by the will of the princes but by a free people. He worked incessantly for the reunification of divided Germany. Neither he nor his friends — among them Marshal Blücher, victor over Napoleon at Leipzig and Waterloo, Scharnhorst, the democratic reorganizer of the Prussian army, General von Gneisenau, who introduced the revolutionary system of general military service, the writer Ernst Moritz Arndt ever recognized the legality of the "dissolution" of the Empire by Francis I.

In 1808, Frederick William dismissed Stein for the second time. Shortly afterwards Napoleon, by special decree from Madrid, outlawed Stein as "an enemy of France and of the Confederation of the Rhine", confiscated his property and ordered his arrest.

As a political persecutee Stein went to Russia, where the Tsar received him with great honours. He became Alexander's friend and adviser — a task which he accomplished so well that later he could claim with some justice to have been Napoleon's real conqueror.



## XI

## THE WARS OF LIBERATION AND THE HOLY ALLIANCE

The political and military liberation of Germany from Napoleonic rule was preceded by a moral and intellectual rebirth. There were Stein's political reforms, there were the works of great poets, many of them, like Schiller's dramas, with a keynote of liberty. There were Johann Gottlieb Fichte's fourteen "Addresses to the German Nation", delivered between December 1807 and March 1808 at the Royal Academy of Sciences in Berlin, a powerful expression of the idealist philosophy of history. He appealed to all classes of the people, particularly to youth, to shake off their lethargy and be mindful once more of their duty toward the nation. Fichte realized that an enslaved, dishonoured and divided Germany would inevitably lead Europe into the same predicament. A united, and free, righteous Germany, on the other hand, would be a guarantee of peace and freedom for all occidental nations. Therefore, the duty of the awakening nation was not only toward Germany alone but toward mankind.

The effect of these addresses was quick and extraordinary. "A true realm of righteousness, the like of which has never before descended upon the earth — founded upon the equality of all beings that bear the countenance of man." These words, written in his "Science of the State" in the fateful year 1813, express his vision of a free people serving with justice a rejuvenated mankind.

It was in this sense that his appeal was understood, and with such goals in mind the Germans joined in the war of liberation against Napoleon.

The greatest of the idealist philosophers was Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (born 1770 in Stuttgart, died 1831 in Berlin). For him, history was the carrying out of God's plan of world government. History steadily moves on. It is a process making for greater freedom, and for a morality ever more consciously willed by men.

According to his "dialectical" concept of history, every epoch as a "thesis" bears in its womb its own "antithesis", the conflict of the two leading not to a victory of either but to a new phase, a "synthesis" in which thesis and antithesis are both overcome and preserved. This synthesis becomes another thesis of its own and once again the cycle is repeated on a higher level — until, at the end of time, God's goal will



have been attained: a mankind having learned to will freely what is both necessary and morally good.

Hegel's "dialectical" view of history has exercised a truly revolutionary influence. Human institutions — states, social conditions, governments — changed in the light of his philosophy into passing phases in the ever moving stream of time. Karl Marx is Hegel's disciple, borrowing from him the dialectical approach, but substituting divine planning by what he called "economic reality" as the moving force of history.

Hegel is also one of the first modern philosophers to propound racial and religious equality, minority rights, and constitutional government.

His marriage with the Archduchess Marie Louise, daughter of Emperor Francis I of Austria, gained for Napoleon at last what he coveted, "respectability". The birth of his son in 1811, on whom in his cradle he conferred the title "King of Rome", seemed to render his rule secure also for the future.

Allied with Prussia, Austria, and the Confederation of the Rhine, at the head of a "Grand Army" of 600 000 men, of whom one third were Germans, Napoleon in June 1812 marched against Russia. By the middle of September the Emperor was in the Kremlin — only to see the city of Moscow go up in flames.

The retreat from Moscow, the crossing of the Beresina river, the desintegration of the Grand Army — this is one of the great epics of history. At Tauroggen, the Prussian General von York, commander of the Prussian corps which at the beginning of the war was twenty thousand men strong, on his own accord concluded a pact of neutrality with the Russian General Hans Karl Diebitsch.

By December 18, while the remnants of the Grand Army — about one hundred thousand men — were still struggling across the Niemen, Napoleon reached Paris. Despite the catastrophic outcome of the campaign he was able to save his Empire once more, even to raise another powerful army.

In February 1813 Russia and Prussia signed a treaty of friendship. In June of that year England, and in August Austria, joined the alliance. Time and again Napoleon proved himself as the great master of the battlefield, but finally, in the battle of Leipzig (the "battle of the nations") from October 16—19, 1813, his stars deserted him. He was completely defeated by Marshal von Blücher and the imperial general



Prince Schwarzenberg. With the Russian armies joining the allies, they greatly outnumbered Napoleon's forces.

On March 31, 1814 the Allies entered Paris. At the castle of Fontainebleau Napoleon abdicated. He was given the sovereign principality of Elba and retained the imperial title.

Meanwhile Stein had returned from Russia. As adviser to the Tsar he had unceasingly urged that Napoleon's fall should be followed by a new constitution for Germany which, as he put it, had to be protected against France as well as her own German princes. A peaceful and strong Germany, he felt, was Russia's best bulwark against Western aggression. Therefore the "Reich" ought to be restored.

The Congress of Vienna (1814—15) was convoked to settle the affairs of Europe, which for decades had gone from bad to worse. It was attended by most of the rulers of Europe. The chief negotiator for Austria was the state chancellor Clemens Wenzel Prince of Metternich, whose name was to become a by-word for this whole epoch. Prince Hardenberg and Wilhelm von Humboldt represented Prussia, Lord Castlereagh and the Duke of Wellington England. For Russia, the Tsar was his own spokesman. Among his advisers was again Stein. Defeated France was ably represented by Prince Talleyrand.

No German Reich was reestablished at the Congress of Vienna, but only a loose German Confederation (*Deutscher Bund*) of thirty five sovereign princes and four city republics. Stein was the only one to plead the popular cause. His efforts resulted in the insertion of Article XIII into the Charter of the Confederation, which stated: "In all states of the Confederation there shall be a constitution based on provincial diets." Every inequality between Catholics and Protestants in the enjoyment of civil and political rights was to be abolished. Jews also were to enjoy civil liberties. Article XVI read: "Civil rights in return for their assumption of civic duties . . . could be granted and secured to them." Free purchase of land, the right of all citizens to choose their place of residence, identical rules for the freedom of the press and the like were envisaged.

The grand-duchy of Saxony-Weimar, where Goethe was minister of state, was the first to introduce a constitution, in 1816. Bavaria and the grand-duchy of Baden followed in 1818, Württemberg in 1819, and Hesse Darmstadt in 1820.

So during the first few years there was hope that the Confederation might develop a progressive constitution. But the chief organ of the Confederation, the *Bundestag* or Federal Diet constituted at Frankfurt,



was a congress of diplomats rather than anything approaching a parliament. Austria was the presidial power, though large sections of its vast domains — Hungary, Galicia, the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom — remained outside the Confederation and were not even under its nominal jurisdiction. As to the Prussian kingdom, its provinces of East Prussia, West Prussia, and Posen also remained outside.

The man who dominated the Federal Diet and, in fact, European politics for years to come, was Prince Metternich. His chief concern was the preservation of the existing system based on princely absolutism.

For Stein, there remained little to do in his declining years. Only one other lasting achievement was he able to accomplish; the founding of the *Monumenta Germaniae historica*, a collection of documents by which he hoped to revive the sense of history as a prerequisite for any political revival. The publication of the *Monumenta* has been continued ever since. They are now extant in over one hundred volumes which contain the most primary sources of German and occidental history.

Stein died in 1831, in the same year as Hegel and one year before Goethe.

The main goals for which the people had been striving remained unfulfilled — national unity and democratic freedom. The "Holy Alliance", of which nothing was holy but its name, dominated Europe. It was a proclamation of pious principles rather than an alliance. The original document, drawn up by Tsar Alexander I was also signed by Emperor Francis I, King Frederick William III and finally (with the exception of the Pope, the King of England and the Sultan) by all European rulers. Its main object was to preserve the *status quo* in foreign policy. Home policy was dominated by the Carlsbad Decrees of 1819 and the Final Acts of Vienna of 1820. These spelled censorship over all publications, schools, and universities. All tendencies toward national unity were outlawed as "treason" against the member states. A central police department was established to deal with democratic and other "subversive" movements.

Under the Metternich System, Article XIII was emasculated by stating that its provisions should not be mistaken for democracy: "The whole of state power must remain concentrated in the hands of the monarch, whose sovereignty cannot be infringed upon by a constitution; only the exercise of certain of his rights can be made dependent on the cooperation of the estates." In 1832 the black-red-golden colours, symbol of German national unity and freedom, were banned.

The peace with France, the first Paris Treaty of 1814, and the



second one of 1815 after Napoleon's final defeat at Waterloo, are documents of wisdom and moderation. They made it easy for the French to reenter the family of European nations. None thought of blaming the French people collectively for twenty five years of devastating wars of aggression which first the Republic, then Napoleon had conducted against Europe.

It also was a period of important spiritual and cultural achievements. King Ludwig I of Bavaria adorned Munich with beautiful buildings in the classicistic style and encouraged it to become a metropolis of the arts, of science and learning — so much so that it has been called the "Athens on the Isar river". The king was among the leading "Philhellenes" who helped the Greek people in their struggle for freedom and independence. In 1832, his younger son Otto became the first king of liberated Greece. Modern Athens is largely a Wittelsbach creation.

In Berlin, the great architects and sculptors Schinkel, Schadow and Rauch were at work. Hegel taught at the University founded in 1809. The genius of Beethoven consummated his work, Karl Maria von Weber, Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, Felix Mendelsohn-Bartholdy — they all contributed to Germany's name in the realm of music.

The poets Heinrich Heine, one of the best known abroad, Eduard Mörike and Count Platen, the dramatists Büchner and Hebbel (some of whose works are still to be found on the stage in Germany, and elsewhere) all belong to this period.

The historians Leopold von Ranke and Theodor Mommsen began to be known around the middle of the century. The newly developed sciences of chemistry and physics, as well as medicine, physiology, astronomy were moving forward with big strides.

In spite of repression and even persecution, the period from 1815 to 1848 cannot be compared in any way with modern totalitarianism. The restraining power of cultural, humanitarian, and religious traditions, heritage of a living past, was still too strong then to permit barbarous outrages. Even some political opposition could manifest itself, although with difficulties, as at the Wartburg Festival in 1817, which was organized by democratically minded students of the university of Jena, to commemorate both the Reformation and the battle of Leipzig. Another impressive demonstration foreshadowing indeed the Revolution of 1848, was the Hambach Festival of 1832. Twenty five thousand people gathered there under the leadership of south German liberals. Polish refugees also attended the mass meeting and were hailed as



brethren who had suffered for the common cause of liberty. The demand was raised, quite revolutionary at that time for the "United Free States of Germany" and a "confederated republican Europe".

Prussia had emerged from the wars of liberation considerably enlarged, its territory now reached westward across the Rhine. Although political power had reverted to crown, nobility, and bureaucracy, Berlin developed more and more into an intellectual centre for the whole nation. Nowhere were people quicker to adopt new trends, nowhere had novel ideas a better chance than in that city with its almost American lack of prejudices, and thus Prussia became for all German patriots a beacon of hope.

In 1840 King Frederick William IV succeeded his father. As a young man he had been given to liberal and national ideas, and thus his accession encouraged all progressive forces who expected him to put the weight of Prussia behind the aspirations for German unification.

Economically Germany was already well on its way toward unity, due to a Customs Union or Common Market, as one might say with a modern term. Here, too, Prussia had taken the lead. Composed as it was of provinces with sixty seven different tariffs and one hundred and nineteen monetary systems its first step towards unification was to abolish all interior tolls. In 1819, Prussia approached even a policy of free trade — raw materials were completely exempted from customs duties, manufactured goods paid not more than ten percent. This compelled manufacturers to produce cheaply and well, in order to compete with the British. Soon other German states joined, and in 1833 the *Deutsche Zollverein* — German Customs Union — was complete, with the exception of Austria and some northern states. The city states of Hamburg and Bremen, with regard to their maritime trade connections were the last to join, in 1888.

The *Deutschlandlied* — since 1919 Germany's national anthem — was written in 1841 on the isle of Helgoland by the liberal poet Hoffmann von Fallersleben. It pledged allegiance to the ideals of unity, justice, and freedom, placing Germany above all the "fatherlands" of reactionary princes — for the Metternich period a truly revolutionary hymn. This then, not conquest, is the thoroughly liberal meaning of "Deutschland über alles".

King Frederick William IV has been called a romanticist because he displayed some interest in the Middle Ages. He deserves credit for his initiative to complete the cathedral of Cologne, the construction of which



had been halted since the Reformation. Goethe, who disliked fragments, had already urged this. Now, in September 1842, when the first stone was laid, the completion of the structure assumed a new meaning — as a symbol for achieving German unity towards which everyone, men and women of every walk of life and all denominations should contribute.

The cathedral with its imposing two spires, near the bank of the Rhine withstood the bombing of the second world war, but it was heavily damaged. It was reconsecrated in August 1948, in the first large, internationally attended celebration on German soil after the war, and after several more years the last damage was completely repaired.

All progressive patriots in Germany had pinned their hopes on Frederick William IV. But he was a self-contradictory nature, filled with high ideals though rarely brave enough to see them through. Given to grand gestures he could at times be carried away by the stormwind of history.

A new class had come into being, product of the industrial revolution, — the proletariat — those who, in Karl Marx's definition, were "propertyless, with nothing to sell but their labour". In Germany, the "social question" — a new expression for something entirely new again — showed itself with alarming violence for the first time in 1844. The weavers of Silesia, impoverished due to the mechanization of their trade, rose up in revolt. The factory of a ruthless employer was stormed and destroyed, and the revolt spread, until troops were called in. They fired into the crowd, killing men and women.

These events came as a shock to Germany. The great dramatist Gerhart Hauptmann (1862—1946) made the rising of the Silesian weavers the subject of one of his powerful dramatic plays, which is still today effective when performed on the German stage.

The problem posed by the new class of propertyless proletarians was by no means recognized only by the Socialists, whose spokesmen were Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. It was also seen by conservative and Christian circles.

Among the most prominent to speak out was the bishop of Mainz, Wilhelm Emmanuel Baron von Ketteler, who has gone down in history as the first "workingmen's bishop". Attacking courageously what he called the "false doctrine of a rigid, absolute right of property, which is a continuous sin against nature", he stated: "The notorious slogan 'property is theft' is not just a falsehood. It contains, together with a falsehood, a frightful truth as well. By irony or scorn it will not be put



out of the world. As long as it retains a particle of truth, it will be capable of overthrowing the whole of our order."

In 1847 Frederick William consented to convoke a diet. He summoned not a real parliament elected immediately by popular vote but the so called *Vereinigte Landtag*, an assembly composed of members from the various provincial diets. In opening that assembly he emphasized his royal magnanimity in permitting the deputies to meet, and he warned them not to think that he would grant a constitution, "No printed sheet of paper" he stated "shall ever interpose itself between the Lord and this country, like a second providence, as it were, to rule Us with its paragraphs".

Nevertheless, the United Diet showed a remarkably independent and progressive spirit. There almost developed an open conflict between the Crown and this unruly assembly.

Though the United Diet did not achieve much, it afforded proof that progress was on the march.

Among its conservative members, there was Otto von Bismarck-Schönhausen, then thirty-years old. He belonged to the landed gentry or "Junker" class (meaning literally, younger lords). His loyalties were then Prussian rather than German; an incisive speaker of great oratorical power; a born parliamentarian who quickly perceived and exploited the weak points of his opponents; and at that time, an avowed foe of parliamentary institutions — such was the stature of the man when he made his entrance into public life. He was to take a strong hand in determining the course of German and European history during the next decades, till his retirement in 1890. By then he had become a prince, founder of a federal German Reich and chancellor of a government working together closely with a democratic parliament which he himself had created.



## XII

## THE REVOLUTION OF 1848: TURNING POINT OF THE CENTURY

The revolutionary upheavals of the year 1848 shook Europe to its foundations. Curiously enough they started at the University of Munich, with a students' demonstration protesting against the political influence of a Spanish-Irish dancer, Lola Montez, favorite of King Ludwig I of Bavaria.

In Paris, the February Revolution of workers and students brought about the abdication of Louis Philip, who had been "King of the French" since the July Revolution of 1830. Once blue-white-red had been the revolutionary banner, now it was menaced by a more radical symbol — the red flag.

On February 27, at Mannheim in the grandduchy of Baden, an improvised gathering attracting large masses demanded freedom of the press, trial by jury, freedom of coalition, even the arming of the people, and a German parliament. These demands spread like wildfire. Similar meetings were held in the kingdom of Württemberg, the grandduchy of Hessen-Darmstadt, and in other German states. Soon there were clashes between rioters and government troops, but the governments, taken by surprise, yielded.

The *Bundestag* in Frankfurt abolished censorship, and the black-red-golden flag, outlawed so far, was accepted as the official symbol of the German Confederation.

In Vienna, the revolution led mainly by university students, broke out on March 13. Under the first impact, the omnipotent state chancellor Prince Metternich resigned and fled to England. His entire edifice of power collapsed like a house of cards. An imperial proclamation promised national autonomy to all the various peoples and tongues under Habsburg rule.

On March 15 the first barricades went up in Berlin and there was bloodshed. Three days later censorship was abolished. Although King Frederick William IV promised to cooperate in working out a constitution for the whole of Germany, riots continued and the royal troops were beaten back by the people, led by students and workers from the Borsig machine shops. Then the king, intimidated and heartbroken, ordered withdrawal of the military contingents and consented to the arming of the people. On March 19 he was again humiliated — he was



made to pay his respect, standing and with bared head, to the bodies of the victims of the revolution lying in state in the inner courtyard of the Berlin royal castle.

On March 20, King Ludwig I of Bavaria was forced to abdicate in favour of his son, Maximilian II.

In Prussia, meanwhile, all political prisoners had been released, among them, at the express demand of the people of Berlin, the Poles who two years before had led a revolt against the royal Prussian government in the province of Posen.

On March 21, the king himself adopted the revolutionary symbol of national unity. With a large black, red, and gold banner flying before him he paraded through Berlin. The princes of the blood, all cabinet ministers, and the generals accompanying him also displayed the German colours. On that day the Prussian king could have become the democratic emperor of a united German nation.

But Frederick William was not the man to act quickly or courageously. When voices from among the people greeted him as Emperor of the Germans, he frowned disapproval. While making liberal addresses to students and soldiers, he was toying already with the idea of counterrevolution.

That same evening he issued a proclamation "To my people and the German nation", in which he said: "Today I have adopted the traditional German colours. I have placed myself and my people under the honoured banner of the German Reich. Prussia, henceforth, will be merged in Germany." Solemnly he promised the fulfillment of all the demands of the revolution, a constituent national assembly, trial by jury, equal civic rights, a truly democratic constitution.

The multi-national Habsburg state was shaken to its core: In the German provinces, a powerful desire for national unity came to the fore, urging a union of the German people regardless of artificial border lines or outdated dynastic rights. Similar tendencies for national independence sprang up in Hungary, Bohemia, Croatia, and in the Italian speaking provinces.

Events in Hungary retained a lasting importance in Europe. Ludwig Kossuth (1802—94), a revolutionary national leader of great gifts, caused the Hungarian diet to depose the house of Habsburg-Lorraine. Hungary was proclaimed a republic. But the young Emperor Francis Joseph I (1848—1916) successor to his uncle Ferdinand I who had abdicated on December 2, 1848 accepted an offer by Tsar Nicholas to



crush that revolution with Russian troops. The Hungarians were defeated, Kossuth fled to Turkey, then to England and America. On August 13, 1849 the Hungarians at Világos surrendered to the Russian commander, General Paskiewitch, and the kingdom of Hungary under Habsburg rule was restored.

When a few years later in the Crimean War (1853—56) England, France and Turkey lined up against Russia, the Tsar naturally expected Austria to come to his assistance. But Austria favoured the Western powers and even added to Russia's predicament by diplomatic pressure. This act of ingratitude was never forgotten in St. Petersburg. It led to a growing tension and contributed significantly to the outbreak of the first world war.

Even in 1956, when the Hungarian people rose up against Soviet-Russian dictatorship, the memory of Világos revived, and inspired the Hungarians to fight to the last. Despite defeat, the spirit of resistance against the foreign conqueror who is in league with a native despot has not been destroyed.

The revolution successfully insisted on the convocation of an Austrian *Reichstag*. This diet abolished all remaining feudal restrictions, and it drafted a democratic constitution which, although frustrated by the victory of counter-revolution, influenced Austria's Constitution of 1860/1861 and even the so-called Compromise of 1867 with Hungary, by which the centralized Habsburg state was transformed into a "Dual Monarchy". Hungary thereby obtained a large measure of selfgovernment.

On March 31, 1848 a *Vorparlament* or Preliminary Parliament for the whole of Germany consisting of deputies from the various state diets convened in Frankfurt. It ordered general elections to be held by direct suffrage, for a National Assembly, which constituted itself on May 18 in Frankfurt, the ancient coronation city of the Roman-German emperors. With its 830 members, among them many professors, scholars, physicians, lawyers, it became one of the most distinguished constituent assemblies in history.

As its meeting place a wide circular church was chosen, the Paulskirche. That church, destroyed by aerial bombing during World War II, was reconstructed in time for the centennial celebration of the revolution, in 1948, and this became a landmark in the development of German democracy. The late President Kennedy spoke here on June 25, 1963.

The national Assembly suspended the *Bundestag* as supreme organ of



the German Confederation, and elected a *Reichsverweser* or Regent, Archduke John of Austria, a man of democratic convictions, married to a commoner. The Regent in turn appointed a Federal Government responsible to the National Assembly. The principal achievement of the Paulskirche was a constitution for the German Reich, which was adopted on March 28, 1849 and published in the Official Gazette, on April 28, 1849. Here a satisfactory balance between federal and state powers was arrived at. The *Reichstag* or Federal Parliament was to consist of a House of Representatives or "People's House", to be elected by universal, equal, secret and direct vote, and a Senate or "House of States". Legislation on all important matters was to be in the hands of this parliament, with the Reich Government responsible to the lower house. A supreme court was to have appellate jurisdiction over all state courts as well as in disputes between member states. The head of the Reich, to be known as Emperor of the Germans, was to be elected by the National Assembly and the Emperor was to have only a suspensive veto against acts of Parliament.

An elaborate bill of the basic rights of citizens (*Grundrechte*) was included in the Constitution. This had been adopted and promulgated by the National Assembly at an earlier date, before the Constitution itself. Both have served as models for all future German developments, for the constitutions of the North German Confederation of 1867, the German Reich of 1871, the Weimar Republic of August 11, 1919, and of the Federal German Republic of May 8, 1949.

On March 28, 1849, Frederick William IV was elected Emperor, with 290 deputies voting for him and 248 abstaining, thus making the election technically unanimous. But on April 21 he declined the crown offered to him by the people. It reeked of revolution, he declared, proving thereby that he was not the man who could fittingly head a united democratic nation. With this refusal the work of the Paulskirche came to an end. Shortly afterward the deputies left Frankfurt. A part of them reassembled in Stuttgart as a rump parliament, until in June 1849 they were dispersed by government troops.

In Vienna and Berlin the counter-revolution had triumphed, too. The diets or constituent national assemblies of these states were all broken up by force. Civil war broke out in the grand-duchy of Baden, in the Bavarian Palatinate and in Saxony (here Richard Wagner took part in it on the side of the revolutionaries), and in other parts of Germany. The people were fighting for the Frankfurt Constitution, against reaction



and the splitting up of Germany by princely particularism, but everywhere they were crushed by force of arms.

Martial courts began to mete out punishment to all who had risen in support of democracy. Masses of political refugees crossed the Atlantic. Every fortieth German, one million in all, found a new home in the United States within the seven years following the defeat of the revolution, and they have made a significant contribution to the development and growth of their adopted country.

The black, red, and golden dream seemed to have come to an end, but not for long: Something had changed in the German mind, and bayonets could not drive out the longing for unity and freedom. The day soon was to come when one of the bitter enemies of the revolution of 1848, Otto von Bismarck, would himself take over its legacy and carry it to victory.

The affairs of divided Germany, in the heart of Europe, were of course influenced from abroad. The United States sympathized strongly with the democratic movement for German unity, President James K. Polk as the only head of a foreign nation even sent official greetings to the Frankfurt assembly. But America was far away, and its weight in world affairs was then not great.

England favoured a "*kleindeutsche*", small German solution, meaning the exclusion of the Germans in Austria. The Second French Republic sympathized with the revolution for ideological reasons, but for reasons of French power politics it encouraged groups of German emigres to start an armed invasion of southern Germany. After all, the Second Empire became visible in outline already in December 1848, when Prince Louis Napoleon was elected president of the Republic.

Tsar Nicholas I, absolute ruler of Russia, threatened armed invasion if the revolution were to proceed any further.

Thus, the movement for democratic unity was also hemmed in by Germany's lack of power. Only a Germany strong enough to defend its territory would be able to achieve its national freedom and unity undisturbed.

On January 31, 1850 King Frederick William imposed on Prussia a constitution which, while incorporating many a feature of the revolutionary constitutions, retained of course the royal power as ultimate authority. Also the electoral system was wholly unsatisfactory. But at least it provided an instrument for the development of modern, democratic legislation and social progress. It remained in force till 1918.

After having missed the historic hour by lack of vision and moral



courage, Frederick William IV, again halfheartedly, took up an idea of his own, a German Union, excluding Austria. On Prussia's initiative a parliament of representatives of twenty four German states met at Erfurt on March 20, 1850, to work out a constitution for a Germany much reduced in size compared to the plans of 1848. Tsar Nicholas opposed this venture, and so, of course, did Austria.

War with Austria seemed an imminent danger, and under this threat Frederick William IV gave in at the Conference of Olmütz (the so-called "Humiliation of Olmütz"), on November 29, 1850. Abandoning the Erfurt Parliament, he consented to a reconstruction of the old German Confederation, with the Bundestag in Frankfurt, as its supreme organ.

Thus, what had taken place on the German level in 1848/49 was repeated in Prussia a year later. If Prussia wished to assert herself within Germany, she must become a power in foreign politics, and that meant she must be strong also militarily.

The conservative deputy Otto von Bismarck, a participant in the short lived Erfurt Parliament, appreciated this lesson. He supported Prussia's surrender at Olmütz because a sense of reality told him that power politics without power were a foolhearted venture. It was this realism and a gift for appraising correctly, without wishful thinking, what would be possible to achieve in a given situation, which enabled him to bring about German unity and, at the same time, to secure for Europe one of the longest periods of peace this troubled continent has enjoyed in centuries.

German nationalists and anti-German propagandists alike are in error when they praise or condemn Bismarck as an alleged "militarist", or a worshipper of power for power's sake. His basic conviction was, on the contrary, that the political organs of the State must have primacy over the military. Once the military begins to take control the downfall of the state is at hand. In all stages of his life Bismarck was notable for his vision, his energy of action, his moral courage also in the face of his superiors, even his sovereign, and for his diplomatic genius. As a man he had great personal charm. He was never boisterous, rather softspoken, a perfect gentleman and host, of unfailing courtesy also towards his defeated enemies, and a loyal husband and father. His erudition and general knowledge in history, literature, and world affairs was impressive, his spoken and written French excellent. He was known for his tact, his deep-seated humanism, his readiness to learn from his opponents as well as from foreigners.

Bismarck never permitted his own sympathies or antipathies for other



governments or nations to influence his political decisions. Propaganda of whatever kind left him cold and whenever he made use of propaganda slogans himself, he would have considered it the height of foolishness to take them at their face value.

### XIII

#### THE SOLUTION OF THE GERMAN QUESTION

In 1851, Bismarck was appointed Prussian delegate to the diet of the German Confederation in Frankfurt. He held this office for eight years, and those years became for him a school of international politics. It was here that he became intimately familiar with Austrian, English, French, Russian policies no less than with all the petty rivalries within Germany itself.

Frequent diplomatic missions abroad — to Paris, London, Vienna — broadened his field of vision. They convinced him that the most formidable obstacle to the unification of Germany was the Habsburg monarchy.

But at the Frankfurt "listening post" Bismarck also learned to appraise his own state more correctly. He discovered that if Prussia was a European power at all, it was a fifth rate one. This was a basic fact from which he had to proceed.

In France, meanwhile, the Second Republic had given way to the Second Empire of Napoleon III (1852—70). While the other Prussian conservatives disdained in Napoleon the upstart of revolutionary origin, Bismarck had no such prejudices. For years he was on excellent terms with the Emperor, and not until 1866 did he begin to suspect a possibility of war with Napoleonic France.

The conservative Prussian Junker and the autocratic French emperor were very different personalities and yet they had also much in common. There were stronger ties between them than a mutual respect for shrewd statesmanship.

Like Napoleon III, heir of Austerlitz and Jena, Bismarck was a civilian by nature; the uniform and things military were to both men a means in the game of politics, deliberately, not sentimentally used. Bismarck gradually accepted the revolutionary ideas of 1848, which he had at first rejected. From his narrow Prussian loyalty he moved towards a wider national concept. The Emperor of the French had in his earlier



years belonged to the secret society of the *Carbonari*, whose aim was the democratic unification of Italy, and in his heart he always preserved a spark of that youthful idealism. As the representative of French power politics he might prefer a divided Germany, but the Carbonaro in him made him sympathize with Bismarck's schemes to achieve in Germany what Count Camillo Cavour, prime minister of the kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia, and the national hero Giuseppe Garibaldi were working for in their divided Italian fatherland.

Bismarck's friendly attitude toward France did not, however, induce him to throw his weight against Russia when Napoleon, together with England and Turkey, engaged in the Crimean War in 1845. On the contrary, he violently opposed participation. Prussian neutrality, largely Bismarck's work, restrained Austria and kept the war from becoming world-wide. Austrian pressure on Berlin was strong at the time, and it was supported by court circles, who regarded a pro-Western attitude as more refined and indicative of a higher degree of culture than siding with uncouth Russia.

On the other hand, Bismarck also rejected an alliance with Russia if it was to be directed offensively against France or Austria. While there might be armed conflicts with the Habsburgs, or with Napoleon, Bismarck did not wish to see either France or Austria weakened permanently. He recognized in the foe of today the friend and, certainly, the neighbour of tomorrow. In a possible dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire he could see nothing but an unmitigated catastrophe. "I could not visualize for the countries composing the Austrian monarchy", he wrote in 1866 upon the conclusion of the war with Austria, "any future that would be acceptable to us if that monarchy were destroyed. What could one set up instead in that part of Europe which is today occupied by the Austrian state; from the Tyrol to the Bukovina? In that geographic area any newly formed creations could only be of a permanently revolutionary nature".

History proved him right. The processes of a "permanently revolutionary nature" which he predicted for the Austrian successor states have not yet come to an end.

Bismarck also abandoned the idea of the Fortyeighters for a union with the German parts of Austria. "For German Austria we have no use, either wholly or in part", he stated, and he acted accordingly.

Neither France nor Russia could ever be eliminated as great powers. Even after war had broken out in 1870, Bismarck avoided to heap any unnecessary humiliation on France, for out of such memories there



usually grow the plans of revenge. Russia seemed to Bismarck the most reliable ally on the continent. Of course he did not expect a sentimental friendship, any more than he himself was sentimental in his motives. One of these was his apprehension that present enemies might make up their differences at Germany's expense. Bismarck dreaded a Franco-Russian alliance as a deadly embrace of Germany.

Here also is the key for an understanding of his foreign policy when he became Chancellor of the German Reich. More clearly than other statesmen of his day did he perceive how precarious was this European world of rivaling states. Stable as it might appear, the modern world was imperiled from the beginning by social strife, revolution, and opposing national forces, while the feeling for the European commonwealth in which all nations were brethren faded away. Bismarck foresaw not only a world war which would "plunge Europe into a life and death struggle from the Pyrenees to Moscow, from the North Sea to Palermo, ending in sheer futility, with none of the participants aware finally for what cause they had been fighting". He also foretold that such a war might mushroom into a general social revolution.

These dangers, a menace to all of Europe, made necessary an extremely cautious, balanced, and moderate policy, aiming to bind the great powers, like dangerous chemical elements, as it were, in stable non-explosive compounds. Germany, in the heart of Europe and most exposed to aggression, must always retain a chance to mediate even between her own allies in order to avert armed conflicts. Should, however, war become inevitable, it must be kept as short as possible, from the very beginning with limited goals in mind which should be acceptable also to the vanquished.

When Frederick William suffered a stroke in 1857, his younger brother Prince William took over as regent and, after the king's death in January 1861, as king of Prussia. In 1871, he was to ascend the throne of united Germany as Emperor William I († 1888). Bismarck uses the English terms of "common sense" and "gentleman" to describe this monarch who, while not an outstanding mind himself always had the greatness to accept competent council. He was a conscientious worker, true to his friends and chivalrous towards defeated enemies. While regarded as an exponent of reaction during the Revolution of 1848, he later developed a more liberal view of modern kingship founded on constitutional fair play.

At first Bismarck did not find it easy to deal with his new sovereign. He had already gained the reputation of being a statesman in the



grand style, a man ready to negotiate with the "upstart" Bonaparte, anti-British, it was said, and altogether quite different from the traditional, somewhat provincial type of Prussian diplomat. King William was almost afraid of this man, but then he discovered that Bismarck with all his genius, was also the most loyal servant the state could possibly find.

In 1859 Bismarck was sent into "honourable exile" as minister to St. Petersburg. These years were most valuable for the intimate knowledge they afforded him of Russian affairs, weaknesses as well as greatness.

Just as he had instigated the Crimean War of 1854, Napoleon III, the "carbonaro emperor", instigated the war against Austria in 1859 allying himself with King Victor Emmanuel II of Piedmont-Sardinia of the House of Savoy. Again Bismarck, countering popular sentiment which favoured Austria, pleaded for neutrality. The horrors of the battlefields of Magenta and Solferino (on June 4 and 24, 1859) opened a new chapter in the history of war. The use of railroads permitted a concentration of troops and the new weapons a mutual butchery of such masses of men as had been unheard of previously.

It was at Solferino, due to the initiative of an eyewitness to the gruesome conditions on the battlefields and in the overcrowded and inadequate hospitals, the Swiss physician Jean Henri Dunant, that the International Red Cross was born.

The two emperors, Francis Joseph and Napoleon, were prompted by the carnage of Solferino no less than by fear of internal unrest to end the war by the agreement of Villafranca. Austrian Lombardy with the capital of Milan was ceded to France, which in turn ceded it to Piedmont. In the following year, March 1860, Napoleon took over the Piedmontese provinces of Savoy and Nice as a "compensation" for his assistance in the unification of Italy.

The Italian unity movement could not be stopped anymore. Revolutionary uprisings followed by plebiscites in favour of a union with Piedmont swept away the various foreign dynasties in northern and central Italy. In May 1860 Giuseppe Garibaldi with his "Thousand Redshirts" landed in Sicily, took Palermo, crossed the Straits and conquered Naples. The Bourbon monarchy collapsed. By October, the whole of southern Italy voted for union with Piedmont.

On March 17, 1861 the Kingdom of Italy was proclaimed, with Florence as its capital and Victor Emmanuel II (now hailed as "Father of the



Fatherland") as the first king. Only the Papal State of Rome and Austrian Venetia still remained outside.

These events were a powerful stimulus for German longing for unification.

Bismarck's first important memorandum on the solution of the German question dates from July 1861. Here we find the first clear proposals for a national representation of the German people at the seat of the central office of the German Confederation. A German people's parliament — this was the program of 1848! This parliament, Bismarck suggested, should have legislative power over military matters and over all questions pertaining to trade, commerce, and customs. There was as yet no suggestion of universal suffrage; this parliament was to be elected by the state parliaments. Nevertheless, it represented an important step forward. Such an organ, Bismarck felt, would counterbalance the policies of Austria which being orientated dynastically, were no longer compatible with the interests of the German people.

Thus, as in the days of Stein and again in 1848, Prussia began to emerge in the eyes of the German nation as the hope and standard-bearer of democratic unification.

No such driving power was to be found in the other parts of divided Germany. But all of them have contributed to the progress of the arts and sciences, winning for the nation a respected place among civilized mankind long before there existed a unified German Reich. Munich, the "Athens on the Isar River" with its humanist spirit and magnificent classicistic buildings, holds in this field a high rank. Its devotion to the arts, its excellent university — today once again among the leading ones in Europe — its operas and theatres, and, last not least, its gaily cosmopolitan life made the city an attraction for friends of beauty and learning all over the world.

In 1864, King Ludwig II, grandson of the "Philhellene" Ludwig I whose son Otto had become the first king of liberated Greece, ascended the throne. He was then only eighteen years old. His magic beauty, a profound love for the arts, his royal demeanor and a strange, fascinating romanticism which found expression in some of the castles he built, were in that sober bourgeois century like an island of golden legend. Among his first acts of government was to call Richard Wagner to his side, with whose genius he found an intimate communion. The lasting monument to their friendship and work is the Opera House at Bayreuth built by Ludwig. It has remained a spiritual center of Europe and a shrine of pilgrimage for music lovers from all countries.



King Ludwig's mysterious death in 1886, in the lake of Starnberg in southern Bavaria added to his life the somber note of a Shakespearean drama.

But not Munich alone stands out as a German cultural center. The "decentralization" of culture in Germany is a phenomenon which in Europe is shared only by Italy. The excellent theatres in Hamburg, Dresden, Leipzig, Weimar, Meiningen, Stuttgart, Düsseldorf and in many other cities are unequalled anywhere in such variety and dispersal. There are the famous museums of Munich, Dresden, Cologne, the Romanesque and Baroque treasures of Würzburg, Augsburg, Bamberg, Nürnberg, (all badly hit in the second world war), there is Heidelberg with its renowned university, second oldest in Germany, there are the ancient Hanseatic cities (Hamburg, Lübeck, Bremen) with their world open spirit and there are countless others, large and small where the creative spirit left its mark.

And, of course there is Berlin, the very centre of intellectual, artistic, international life, with its University and Music Academy, its Technical University, its picture galleries, the Pergamon and the Egyptian Museums, its galaxy of theatres and concert halls.

While Bismarck rose to prominence in the north, Bavaria possessed in Prince Chlodwig zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst (d. 1901) a statesman of great merits. As a young man he had put himself at the disposal of the revolution of 1848, and all his life he preserved a spark of that liberal spirit. Called in by the confidence of King Ludwig II, Hohenlohe was Bavarian Minister President from 1866 till 1870, working for the unification of Germany. Although in background and upbringing quite different from Bismarck, he supported his policies, and in 1894 he became Bismarck's second successor as Chancellor of the German Reich, an office he held until 1900.

In September 1862, when Bismarck was on a vacation trip through Southern France, a coded telegram from his friend, the General Count Albrecht Theodor von Roon, minister of war, called him back to Berlin. On September 23 Bismarck was appointed Minister President and, although the king remained reluctant to the last, also Minister of Foreign Affairs.

A state crisis had developed because the Crown and the Diet were locked in a bitter conflict. Roon had carried out a much needed reform of the army whose weapons were antiquated while general conscription existed only on paper. It was unlikely that this army could have withstood an attack by a medium-sized power, let alone France. The Liberals,



who had a majority in the diet, looked upon the reforms with disfavour for fear that the king, influenced by Roon, might try to get the army even more fully into his own hands.

When the diet was dissolved in 1860, elections brought an even larger majority of the radically liberal *Fortschrittspartei*, or Progressive Party. The new diet refused to grant any money at all for military expenditures.

Roon called Bismarck home when the king was considering abdication, while the crown prince, the later Emperor Frederick III, father of William II, refused to assume the royal office. Bismarck took over as the "king's man". In a defiant speech before an uproarious diet, on January 27, 1863, he challenged his opponents to unseat him and take over power themselves. This netted him the reproach of being hostile to the liberal trend of the time and in favour of dictatorial methods, but the primary duty at that particular moment was to save the state from desintegration. Later, in 1866, this was recognized by parliament itself.

The wise peace treaties concluding the three short wars involving Prussia while Bismarck held office — 1864, 1866, 1871 — proved his prudence and moderation as a statesman.

The conflict between Denmark and the German Confederation (not merely Prussia) had been brewing since 1848. Before 1806, the German duchies of Schleswig and Holstein had been, like the Danish king himself, under the overlordship of the emperor. Later Holstein became a member of the German Confederation as constituted at the Congress of Vienna. The two provinces enjoyed many privileges of autonomy, and as the Danish king Christian I had sworn upon his election as duke of Schleswig and count of Holstein in 1460, they were to remain forever undivided. That Holstein, the more southerly province, was completely German was doubted not even by the most nationalistic Danes. But Schleswig, too, was predominantly German. Hardly one third of the people understood Danish and less than a fourth, all of these in northern Schleswig, used it as their common tongue. The language of the educated classes, of literature and science, was German.

Denmark in the nineteenth century took advantage of the trend towards national states to tie the duchies more closely to its own body political, while these reacted by tending more clearly towards a German national state. When they were incorporated by Denmark, this was in open violation of their autonomy rights. Feeling had been running high for years when, in January 1848, King Frederick VII announced plans for an all-Danish constitution and parliament.



The events of March 1848 in Germany fanned the spark of national resistance against "Danization". The duchies demanded constitutional liberty, arms for the people, and incorporation of Schleswig into the German Confederation. When the Danish king declined, the duchies formed a provisional government at Kiel. A German, duke Christian August of Augustenburg, legitimate claimant to the duchies, addressed himself to Prussia for help. Soon afterwards, the Danish army marched into the duchies.

German federal troops came to the rescue, but their campaign was cut short by an intervention of France, England, Russia, and Sweden, and thus the Schleswig-Holstein question remained as one of the problems left behind unsolved when the national democratic movement of 1848 failed. The "London Protocol" of 1852 was a humiliation for all of Germany. Yet, it provided at least that the duchies must not be separated nor formally incorporated into the Danish kingdom.

The crisis broke out anew, in 1863 when King Christian IX, son of Frederick VII, promulgated an all-Danish constitution which provided for the incorporation of Schleswig. War began in 1864. Austria and Prussia were fighting as allies in the name of the German Confederation, of which Holstein was a member. Saxony and Hanover were intrusted to furnish troops.

The reformed Prussian army received in this short war its baptism of fire. The military genius of Helmuth von Moltke, then already sixty four years old, proved itself for the first time in actual war. Moltke did not only look like a scholar, he was one by inclination as well as in his strategic operations.

The war with Denmark was ended by the Treaty of Vienna of October 30, 1864. In the subsequent Gastein Convention of August 14, 1865, Austria and Prussia agreed on a joint sovereignty over the duchies, with Austria administering Holstein, Prussia Schleswig. The little duchy of Lauenburg, also ceded by Denmark, became part of Prussia. This earned for Bismarck the hereditary title of count from his grateful king.

The contest between the two leading German powers had only been postponed by their alliance of 1864. In Prussia, the conservatives were really opposed to any armed conflict with Austria and the South, they feared that Bismarck might ally himself with the German national idea which they identified with revolutionary democracy. But the liberals were no less opposed to war. They saw in Bismarck the "king's man" who did not care so much for German national unity as for the power



of the Prussian kingdom. For the nation, a fratricidal war loomed on the horizon, a struggle between the dynastic interests of the Hohenzollern and the Habsburgs, as tragic as any civil war.

During the weeks preceding the outbreak of hostilities, Count Bismarck as well as Emperor Francis Joseph carried on secret negotiations with Napoleon III. Both wanted to secure his help or at least friendly neutrality. True to traditions dating back to Richelieu and further, Napoleon hoped to obtain a price from either side. He had designs on the Rhineland, he hoped to extend French dominion into the Saar, the Palatinate, perhaps into southwestern Germany. As both sides seemed willing to offer certain "compensations", he felt he could only gain whatever the outcome. Secretly he speculated on a long-drawn struggle that would weaken Germany and eventually lead to the defeat of Prussia.

The war broke out in June 1866 when, upon Austria's motion, the Frankfurt Diet voted federal execution against Prussia for having violated Holstein, i. e. federal territory. That this war lasted only a few weeks and ended with a Prussian victory over Austria, Hanover, Bavaria, and all of southern and central Germany, with their vastly superior armed forces, came as a shock for Europe. A new great power had emerged, which the others henceforth would have to treat as an equal.

Bismarck indeed had not hesitated to ally himself with all forces of the revolution. In Germany, the revolutionary trump card which he put down on the table of the German Federal Diet in Frankfurt on June 10, 1866, was his demand for a German parliament elected by universal suffrage. To fight the Habsburg monarchy from within, he negotiated secretly with revolutionary Czechs, with Hungarian, South Slav, Rumanian nationalists. Today one would call this a "fifth column" technique. Already in April 1866 he had concluded a secret treaty with Italy, promising to her in the case of a Prussian victory the Austrian province of Venetia.

But to keep a check on Victor Emmanuel II, Bismarck established contact also with Giuseppe Garibaldi and his Italian republicans. There were even well founded rumours — just to make sure Emperor Napoleon would keep his word — that members of the French republican opposition had visited Berlin. Nor was Russian friendship to be trusted unconditionally. To parry any danger from that quarter, Bismarck could always light the fuse to set off the Polish powder keg under the throne of the Tsar!

An amazing spectacle indeed, this potential mobilization of the "Inter-



national of Nationalism", Europe's underground of the time, against the established order. The impulses which these forces received from Bismarck remained effective far beyond his own days.

Militarily the war was decided by the battle of Königgrätz of July 3, 1866, again Moltke's work. This was the first battle directed by telegraph, while using trains to achieve a strategic junction of separate armies.

Bismarck's greatest victory, however, was achieved when he wrung from his reluctant king, against the insistence of the victorious generals, the consent to abandon all plans for military gain or glory and to conclude instead the quick Preliminary Peace of Nikolsburg (July 26, 1866) which left Austria's honour and possessions intact. "The contest is decided", Bismarck argued, "the question now is to regain Austria's old friendship". The Peace of Prague of August 23 confirmed the provisions of Nikolsburg. Austria agreed to the dissolution of the German Confederation and a reorganisation of Germany.

In Italy, the Austrians had defeated the Italians at Custoza and in the naval battle of Lissa. Still, owing to Prussia's victory at Königgrätz, Austria had to cede Venetia to Italy.

Prussia annexed Hanover, Electoral Hesse (a state known for its corrupt government), Nassau, the duchies Schleswig and Holstein and the free city of Frankfurt. Bavaria and all other states who had been fighting on Austria's side were left off without territorial losses.

On July 5, 1866 Napoleon III committed a serious blunder when by diplomatic intervention he brought strong pressure to bear on Prussia; but Bismarck, after the victory of Königgrätz, was able to turn down his request to be accepted as mediator. Shortly after Nikolsburg Napoleon presented his claims for "recompensations" as the price for his neutrality. They included the Saar basin, the Bavarian Palatinate, Rhenish Hesse together with Mainz, the fortresses of Landau and Germersheim, and certain parts of Belgium. Bismarck's reply was a categorical No. Napoleon recoiled; his demands became more moderate, and in September he dropped them altogether.

The whole of Germany, even the states which just had been at war with Prussia, felt menaced and humiliated by this French action, so much so that Bismarck, as early as August 1866, was able to conclude with them secret treaties of defence and mutual assistance.

Under Prussian leadership a "North German Confederation" was established. The King of Prussia assumed the presidency and supreme command of all its armed forces. Count Bismarck became *Bundeskanz-*



ler, or Federal Chancellor. On February 12, 1867 the *Reichstag*, or lower house of the Confederation was elected by universal suffrage. The *Bundesrat*, or upper house, was composed of delegates of the member states.

This constitution of the North German Confederation, very progressive with the strong position of the elected parliament and a responsible government, became the model for the German Constitution of 1871.

To emphasize the continuity of constitutional development, the Reichstag of the North German Confederation elected as its chairman the liberal leader Eduard Simson, who in 1849 had been the last president of the Frankfurt National Assembly.

Bismarck, no longer hated as an alleged reactionary opponent to German unity, became the exponent of national democracy. Now he could also make peace with his political opponents at home. He asked the Prussian diet to sanction the expenditures incurred by the state during the period of constitutional conflict. He received it with an overwhelming majority.

#### XIV

#### THE FOUNDING OF THE GERMAN REICH

July, 5, 1866, the date of Napoleon's intervention against Prussia, marks the beginning of a fundamental change in the relations between Napoleon and Bismarck. Historians like to describe the period between that day and July 19, 1870, when France declared war on Prussia, as the "duel" between the two statesmen.

Generally speaking, the year 1866 marks also a turning point in the international evaluation of Bismarck. Even the British who had been especially distrustful, began to look upon him with different eyes: his strength, his success, his moderation in victory could not fail to make an impression.

War almost broke out in 1867 over the "Luxemburg affair". Napoleon had hoped to annex that little country, a member of the German Confederation until its dissolution in the previous year. Bismarck seemed to agree, but in the last moment he opposed Napoleon's schemes. However, Prussia evacuated the fortress of Luxemburg where she had garrisoned troops, and consented to a neutralization of the country.

A wave of strikes and mass demonstrations had induced Napoleon to amend the rather autocratic French constitution. On May 8, 1870, his



"liberal Empire" was approved by plebiscite. At the same time foreign political activity was stepped up in order to strengthen the regime by successes abroad.

The first diplomatic victory was scored early in July 1870 when a vigorous French protest prevailed against Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, a distant relative of the Hohenzollern in Prussia, who had been elected by the Cortes to the Spanish throne. The Prince renounced the crown offered to him. King William I had been opposed to it from the beginning. As to Bismarck, the candidacy, which had not been his idea, was not unwelcome to him. A German prince on the Spanish throne would have been a check on Napoleon.

The incident seemed settled by Prince Leopold's decline, but the French government pushed on. Not so much, indeed, the emperor, who was aging and ill and perhaps no longer entirely master of the situation. It was rather the Empress Eugenie, whose distaste for Protestantism combined with strong anti-Prussian feelings, the foreign minister, Duke Antoine de Gramont, the arrogant and artless French ambassador Count Benedetti, and last not least the radical elements in the country and a chauvinistic press who must bear the chief responsibility for aggravating the situation.

King William, vacationing in Ems, a famous spa in Western Germany, negotiated with Benedetti while Bismarck was retained by illness at his estate of Varzin in Pomerania. Instructed by Gramont, Benedetti demanded finally in a very obtrusive manner a promise in writing by the king that he would never give his consent if a Hohenzollern were ever again to aspire to the throne of Spain. The intent of humiliation was only too obvious. King William terminated the conversation and informed Bismarck by wire, authorizing him to make political use of the events and to inform the public as he should see fit.

Bismarck, back in Berlin, made public thereupon on July 13 what has become known as the "Ems Dispatch". Few events of history have been more distorted, either on purpose or by ignorance, or by the continued repetition of falsehoods, than those pertaining to this Dispatch. The impression was widely created as though Bismarck had forged facts, or withheld vital information from circles legitimately entitled to receive it.

What Bismarck did was to make public the essence of the king's communication to him about the encounter with the French ambassador. He did not alter a single detail. Shortening the communiqué for publication brought out Benedetti's provocation even more clearly in its proper meaning.

Bismarck himself comments: "The difference in the impression of the



shortened text of the telegram from Ems compared to the one the original would have produced was not the result of stronger words but of the form which made the pronouncement appear as final, while in the original it would have seemed only like part of a pending negotiation to be continued in Berlin."

This statement covers the facts correctly. In summarizing the message of the dispatch Bismarck was, to use a colloquial expression, calling Gramont's bluff. The French government now had to show its hand. Neither the French government nor the general public had of course any claim to be informed of the king's own dispatch. That was confidential communication between the king and his minister, for internal use only.

Had the French government wanted peace it would have been easy to explain through diplomatic channels that no provocation had been intended. Instead, Gramont now demanded that King William should "send a letter to the Emperor to the effect that he, when authorizing the prince of Hohenzollern to accept the crown, had had no intention to infringe upon the interests or the dignity of France". This new suggestion, which implied a virtual apology on the part of the king, was an even stronger provocation. To submit to a diplomatic offensive of this kind would have been political suicide. Such a submission would have irreparably discredited the largest German state in the eyes of the German nation and of Europe.

Relying upon an army wrongly believed to be superior, anticipating from Austria and Italy, perhaps even Russia and Denmark assistance that failed to materialize, and hoping in vain for inner German dissension, the French government declared war on the North German Confederation on July 19, 1870. The south German states at once rallied to the side of Prussia, and Bismarck's skilful policy succeeded in keeping all potentially hostile powers out of the game. Russia, under Tsar Alexander II (1855—81), a nephew of King William, was definitely friendly. The Tsar promised to deploy his army against Austria, should the latter intervene against Prussia.

Public opinion in Europe and in America was strongly on the side of Germany. The United States took over diplomatic protection of North German subjects resident in France. The legend of a "German war of aggression against peace-loving France" is of a much later date — it was part of World War I propaganda, but it has not quite died down yet.

The very first weeks of the war led to resounding victories of the



German armies, at Wörth and Weissenburg (August 4 and 6), Mars-la-Tour, Vionville, Gravelotte and so forth. On September 2, 1870 an entire French army, with the Emperor at its head, was forced to capitulate near Sedan.

Bismarck's unfailing courtesy when he met the imperial prisoner is a shining example of chivalry. Later the emperor, with an escort of honour, moved to Castle Bellevue near Fresnois to meet King William, while the high French officers accompanying him were released on their word of honour.

It was typical for Bismarck that in his first conversation with Napoleon after Sedan he at once brought up the question of peace. As in the war of 1866, he was anxious to terminate hostilities as soon as possible.

On September 4, the Second Empire was overthrown in Paris. Once again France was proclaimed a republic. But the war continued. Metz, under General Bazaine, fell on October 27, almost two hundred thousand men went into captivity. On September 19 German armies had begun to invest Paris. The city finally surrendered on January 28, 1871.

The armistice agreement authorized free elections to a French National Assembly. Bismarck wanted the French state to carry on, rather than be supplanted by a German military government. On February 13, the National Assembly met in Bordeaux and elected as chief of government Adolphe Thiers, an elder statesman of liberal convictions.

The war was brought to a close by the Preliminary Peace of Versailles (26 February), which was confirmed by the Peace of Frankfurt of May 10. The negotiations avoided any humiliation of defeated France. Only Alsace-Lorraine, this ancient German province taken over by France in a long drawn out process of eastward expansion, returned to Germany. Bismarck did not favour this, he would have preferred another "Nikolsburg" without any territorial change at all. The war indemnity of six billion francs was reduced to five billions upon the intervention of Empress Augusta. There was no dismantling of fortifications, because Bismarck considered any such request intolerable to French honour. Nor were any other limitations of armament imposed on her. A very short time after the end of war the country had rebuilt her standing army, the most modern in Europe. In 1914, it numbered 910 000 men with 1 325 000 reservists, as compared with 870 000 men and 1 180 000 in Germany. Only the Russian army, almost twice as large as that of Germany, surpassed the French.

The national assembly at Bordeaux accepted the peace terms by a vote of 546 to 107. On September 16, 1873 the last German soldier left



French soil. The indemnity of war had been paid off. French patriotism and an unhampered economic and political recovery had made a rapid payment of the sum possible, after the terms had been modified in June 1872.

While the siege of Paris was still going on, King William of Prussia was proclaimed German Emperor in the Hall of Mirrors in Louis XIV palace of Versailles on January 18, 1871. Preparatory negotiations between the North German Confederation and the South German states had been concluded on November 23, 1870. It was King Ludwig II of Bavaria who, upon Bismarck's suggestion, took the initiative to offer the imperial crown to William I.

With the solemn act of January 18 the German Reich came into being. The proclamation spoke about the German people's "unanimous desire to renew and continue the German imperial dignity, dormant for more than sixty years, while reconstructing the German Reich".

*Semper Augustus* had been the title of the Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire, whereby Augustus has a double meaning — august, or consecrated, as well as augmenting, increasing (in German, *Ewiger Meh- rer des Reichs*). The proclamation referred to this second meaning: "May God grant us and our successors always to augment the German Reich, not by the conquests of war but by the goods and gifts of peace, in the fields of national welfare, freedom, and human progress."

The German Reich of 1871 claimed to be legal successor to the Holy Roman Empire, although the latter had not known of a "German Emperor". The German King, when elected Roman Emperor, became the holder of a supranational office. Now such an office no longer existed. Strictly speaking the German Reich of 1871 was not a "Reich" or Commonwealth, only a State. But enough of the supranational heritage and of the spirit of the occidental community lived on in this German Reich to justify the use that time-honoured designation.

Much of the same heritage was also present in the multinational Austro-Hungarian Empire which after 1866 developed into a modern constitutional commonwealth. While preserving historic traditions, it moved on to ever wider national and individual liberties. Today, in retrospect, one may state that the various nations enjoyed perhaps a greater measure of freedom and of well-being under the Habsburg sceptre than ever since.

In March 1871, the new central parliament, or *Reichstag*, was elected by general suffrage. On April 16, it adopted the Constitution of the



German Reich which it called a "Perpetual Union". It was not a centralized state, but a federation, or *Bundesstaat*. Three of the twenty five members were republics — the ancient Hanseatic cities of Hamburg, Lübeck, and Bremen — twenty two were monarchies, namely, four kingdoms — Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, Württemberg — six grandduchies — the two Mecklenburgs, Oldenburg, Baden, Hesse, Saxony-Weimar — and twelve were duchies and principalities. Sovereignty was vested in the *Bundesrat* or Federal Council, representing the State governments. Since 1911, Alsace-Lorraine, a *Reichsland* under immediate imperial administration was also represented in the *Bundesrat*.

To the King of Prussia, or his hereditary successor, so the Constitution said, "shall pertain the presidency of the Confederation, and he shall have the title of German Emperor" (*Deutscher Kaiser*). He was commander-in-chief of all armed forces of the German Reich, but only in times of war. The Chancellor (*Reichskanzler*) was appointed and dismissed by him, he represented the Reich in its relations with foreign powers, he received and accredited the diplomats. His was an exalted position of honour, but his constitutional powers were rather limited, far weaker than those vested in most republican heads of state, notably the President of the United States who is his own prime minister and who in relation to Congress has the right of legislative initiative and wields the veto power.

Bismarck, elevated to the rank of a Prince (in German *Fürst*) since March 1871, was the first to be appointed *Reich* Chancellor. He held this office in addition to the one as Minister President of Prussia.

A federal law of March 1878 provided that the Chancellor should be assisted by secretaries of state who were responsible to him. From this developed the Reich administration, the Foreign Office, the Home Office, the Treasury, the War Office, the Department of Justice, Navy, Postal Affairs and the others.

By federal and state legislation a full code of modern civic liberties was adopted. Freedom of the press, of opinion, of coalition, and so forth were guaranteed and protected, developing the code which had been contained already in the frustrated Frankfurt Constitution. Now the labour of the revolutionaries of 1848 had finally borne fruit. Only the flag was new, black, white, red, a combination of the black and white of Prussia with the red and white of the free cities. But in the federal coat-of-arms black, red, gold did live on.

The rights of the member states were well defined. There was no



Prussian hegemony, even though in territory and population Prussia made out two thirds of the German Reich.

Embracing all the member states, their governments and diets (some of them elected by universal suffrage) was the Reichstag, the influence of which increased steadily because it represented the whole of the German people. All bills and acts required the consent of the Reichstag, which also exercised a stringent control over the budget. The important codifications of law worked out by it, and later adopted also by various other nations gave to the Reichstag prestige as one of the foremost parliaments in Europe.

Among these codifications were the German Civil Code (passed in 1896, in force since January 1, 1900), the most important achievement of its kind since the Code Napoleon; and the codes of Civil and Criminal Procedure of 1876. The criminal code, the commercial code, the code of maritime law and unified laws on checks and notes taken over from the German or the North German Confederation, were improved and amended. All of these codes, modernized of course, are still in force today.

The development of a federal court system was also the work of Bismarck, culminating in a Supreme Court, or *Reichsgericht*, which was established in Leipzig in 1879.

## XV

### SOCIALISM AND KULTURKAMPF

The legislation of the new German Reich achieved a particular significance due to the fact that it expanded the rights of man into the economic and social spheres. What Stein had envisaged and advocated was carried out by Bismarck.

An "Imperial Message" of November 17, 1881, a landmark in the social emancipation of the working classes, made the beginning. This message, Bismarck's work, recommended legislation to set up insurance against sickness, invalidity, old age, and accident. Between 1881 and 1889 the Reichstag, usually with the votes of the Conservatives, against the Liberals and Socialists, passed the respective laws.

On the basis of such legislation, which provided legal and material security for the "new class", the industrial proletariat, imperial Germany, then the Weimar Republic, and again the German Federal Re-



public after 1949, were able to develop the country into one of the most progressive states in Europe.

In line with social traditions in Prussia, where laws protecting children were introduced as early as 1839 and where since 1853 child labour up to the age of fourteen was banned altogether, the application of the existing codes of industry, at first intended primarily for smaller enterprises were extended equally over the whole of Germany. Elaborate safety devices, provisions for the education and protection of apprentices, of women and youth, public control of working conditions, were abundant and efficient. The industrial code of 1891 contained further provisions to protect youthful persons, prohibiting night labour for those under sixteen and extending compulsory safety devices to all branches of industry. Civil liberties and the liberal practice of the courts were other factors that worked in favour of social progress.

Certainly, Bismarck's fear of social revolutions was one of the motivating factors. But his main impulse derived from ethical sources. He considered that "pure Manchesterism in politics", as he called it, "Let each man himself see to it that he gets along; he who is not strong enough to stand will be run over and trodded down", was incompatible with the ideal of the Christian state.

"I desire to see our state permeated with the doctrine of the religion we profess", he said, "specially with those regarding charity toward one's neighbour and compassion for the old and suffering".

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, in analyzing the growth of modern capitalism, declared it was in the womb of capitalist, "bourgeois" society that the propertyless proletariat was born, as a revolutionary antithesis to all existing order which one day would be destroyed and replaced by the "dictatorship of the proletariat". Unless the workers could be won for democracy and given a worthwhile stake in the modern state, such an outcome, with all the horrors of civil war, seemed inevitable.

In men like Ferdinand Lassalle, Wilhelm Liebknecht and August Bebel the German working class found responsible leaders and outstanding educators. They laid the foundation for the German trade-union movement, one of the pillars of social advance and political liberty. Bismarck was on excellent terms with Lassalle, whose views may have influenced German social legislation. It was Lassalle, who led the German working class toward closer cooperation and reconciliation with the State.

The Social Democratic Party was founded shortly before the war of 1870 broke out. Its program adopted at Gotha, in May 1875, con-



tained, together with many reasonable social demands, also some quite radical features (like a "general arming of the people", read the proletariat; "direct legislation by the people"; "people's courts", etc) which could not possibly be realized without a social revolution.

After two attempts against the life of Emperor William I, Bismarck in 1878 introduced the so-called "Antisocialist Law". It was renewed in 1880, and again 1884 and 1886, first with the votes of the Conservatives and National Liberals, finally also with the support of the Catholic Center Party.

Organisations avowedly aiming to overthrow the existing order by socialist or communist activities, or disturbing the public peace by word and deed were banned. Meetings or demonstrations of such a character could be dissolved, subversive publications were prohibited. Appeal to the courts against any of these measures was admitted. Regions and cities in case of particular peril could be subject to a state of limited emergency not to exceed one year, by order of the central state authorities, provided the Bundesrat would consent. Public meetings would then require police permission; socialist publications must not be openly distributed, persons liable to endanger public order or security could be denied residence in these regions. The import, sale, possession, or carrying of arms could be restricted or prohibited by police order.

The Reichstag refused at all times to tolerate any curtailment of its debates, interference with Socialist election meetings or election propaganda, and the right of Socialist members to sit and vote in parliament.

The Antisocialist Law lapsed on October 1, 1890. It had already been mitigated previously. Actually, this repressive legislation proved a complete failure. The socialists gained votes with every election, while at the same time the Social Democratic party, under an efficient and incorrupt leadership matured to parliamentary responsibility. Finally, in 1912, the Social Democrats with 110 seats out of 397, emerged as the strongest political party in imperial Germany.

Bismarck's course of action must be understood out of the circumstances of the time. Socialism, a child of modern industrialism, was a novel, world-wide phenomenon. The original Social Democratic party, with its revolutionary radicalism was comparable to the Communists of today rather than the modern Social Democratic or Labour Parties.

While Bismarck lost out against the Social Democratic party he won the struggle for the soul of the German workers. What his social legislation initiated was a "deproletarianization of the proletariat", and this made it possible for the working class, who had found a home within



modern society, to withstand the temptations of communism. Thereby, democracy and freedom were saved for the German people in 1918, and again after 1945 in that part of Germany where the workers were free to decide upon their own destiny.

Also the so-called *Kulturkampf* or "struggle for civilisation", as it was baptised by a progressive deputy, the great scholar of pathological anatomy, Rudolf Virchow, left Bismarck a loser. It was a fight between the State and the aspirations of the Catholic Church, not against the Church as such, let alone religion, but rather against her political influence as it was represented in the Reichstag and the State diets by the Center Party. This party, which derived its rather colourless name from being seated in the centre of parliament, was first formed in Prussia in 1859. In the very first Reichstag elected in March 1871, it became an important factor in German politics, and this it remained until it was dissolved by force in 1933. Although reconstituted after 1945, the Center Party failed to regain its former importance and has since vanished almost completely from the German political scene.

Sociologically speaking it was an interesting party, because it did not represent any particular economic or "class" interest. In fact, it was the only one in Germany with a "vertical" structure. Its basis was formed by organized Catholic labour. Farmers, the middle classes, members of the Catholic high nobility all found their place in it, and at the height of its influence it represented thirty to forty percent of the Catholic vote.

Among the founders of the party there was a former Hanoverian minister of justice, Ludwig Windthorst, an able parliamentarian. For many years, at the helm of the party, he was Bismarck's most formidable opponent.

Fundamentally, the conflict between State and Church in Europe was an outgrowth of the secularizing tendencies of nineteenth century nationalism and the distaste of liberalism for religious influence on education and the State. In Germany it flared up first in 1859 in the predominantly protestant grand duchy of Baden; under liberalist influence the grand duke denounced a concordat with the Holy See, and a struggle lasting for many years followed. Catholic Bavaria was next, while in Prussia, largely a protestant country, the pro-Catholic attitude of the protestant dynasty (then headed by King Frederick William IV) ensured the maintenance of peaceful relations.

The First Vatican Council of 1869—70, the first ecumenical one since Trent in the sixteenth century, defined the dogma of papal infallibility



in matters of faith and morals. This, however, was misinterpreted as an attempt to establish papal superiority over the temporal domain. The government of the Emperor of Austria, Apostolic King of Hungary, annulled at once the concordat concluded with the Church in 1855, and a severe conflict followed. In France, Spain, Bavaria, all overwhelmingly Catholic countries, the reaction was equally strong, and finally Prussia and the German Reich also were plunged into the struggle.

Parallels have been drawn between the Kulturkampf and the medieval fight between Church and Empire, between the "Ghibellines" and the "Guelfs", Bismarck himself used such historic images: "Not a fight between faith and unbelievers", he said in 1873, "but rather the age-old contest of power between the kingship and the priesthood . . of the Greek King Agamemnon with his seers in which he lost his daughter Iphigenie . . the contest that filled the German Middle Ages down to the disintegration of the empire . ."

According to a law passed by the Reichstag July 4, 1872, the Jesuit order was excluded from all ministry, either in church or school. Soon the order left Germany, not to be fully readmitted until 1917. In Prussia the so-called "May Laws" of 1873 denied the Church authority to impose penalties in matters temporal and made ecclesiastical discipline as well as the education of the clergy subject to State supervision. In 1875 civil marriage was made compulsory, later this provision was incorporated into the Civil Code of 1900. A law dubbed the "Breadbasket Law" cancelled the State salaries to members of the clergy who refused obedience to Prussian laws. Religious orders and congregations, in so far as they were not engaged in the care of the sick, were dissolved. An exodus of German monks and friars commenced. Episcopal sees became vacant and ministerial activities were halted. Hundreds of priests lost their parishes, others were arrested. Age-old wounds, believed healed, broke open again — the bitter conflict of the Middle Ages and of the Reformation, with the aftermath of all the horrors, never entirely forgotten, of the Thirty Years War.

The German Reich, just founded, was confronted with the spectre of internal disintegration. Fortunately Bismarck had the greatness of mind to recognize his mistakes and to remedy them. When Leo XIII (1878 to 1903), one of the most remarkable men in Church history, ascended the papal throne, Bismarck opened negotiations with him. These direct contacts between a great Pope and a great Chancellor achieved what was most to be desired: peace between the Reich and the Church. Two comprehensive laws of May 21, 1886 and April 29, 1887, modified the



May Laws in a way acceptable to the Church, and the conflict subsided.

Since the end of the Kulturkampf relations between the State and the Church, Catholic as well as Protestant, remained harmonious, not to be disturbed again until National Socialism gained power in 1933 and again after the second world war, when a communist regime was imposed by force in the Soviet occupied zone of Germany.

## XVI

### BISMARCK, THE STATESMAN OF EUROPE

Bismarck considered the German Reich a "saturated" state. Having no need for territorial expansion, it had no ambitions that could have been realized by the sword. To consolidate and develop what he had achieved, both externally and at home, remained Bismarck's prime objective. Only at a very late date did Germany enter the fold of the colonial powers. In 1884—85 Bismarck reluctantly gave his consent to establish some colonies in Africa: German South West Africa, Togoland, Cameroon, and German East Africa. At the same time, the Reich took over the North East of New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago, the Marshall Islands and the Solomons in the South Pacific. Later, in 1898, Kiaochow on the Chinese mainland was leased for ninety nine years, and the Marianna and Palau islands were obtained by purchase from Spain in 1899. In the same year, by American, British and German agreement, two of the Samoa islands were added.

"We have made it our primary task to conciliate the states against which we had to fight", Bismarck said in 1887. In order to help France acquiesce in the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, Bismarck encouraged the building of a French African empire.

Bismarck always was haunted by what he called "*le cauchemar des coalitions*", the nightmare of coalitions, directed against Germany. He tried to prevent an aggressive alliance between France and Russia, such as was advocated by powerful French circles and by Russian Pan-Slavists among the intelligentsia. Pan-Slavism, claiming for Russia a role as protector over all Slav peoples, even in the Balkans, Austria-Hungary, and in Germany, was then as much an instrument of Russian expansive imperialism as is today international communism with its claim that



the workers of the world owe allegiance to Soviet Russia, as the "socialist fatherland".

Under the pressure of the Pan-Slav circles, Russia declared war on Turkey in April 1877. Russian troops advanced to a line just outside Constantinople. The peace treaty of St. Stefano of March 1878 greatly extended Russia's sphere of interest in the Balkans. Turkey had to cede large stretches of territory in Asia, and part of Armenia with Kars, Ardahan and Batum.

As a result, war between England and Russia seemed imminent. At the same time Russian-Austrian relations, tense ever since the Crimean War, deteriorated to the danger point.

The threat of war, which could easily have widened into a world conflagration, was removed by Bismarck's efforts at the international Berlin Congress from June till July, 1878. Acting as an "honest broker", he alienated Russia to a certain extent, for although he secured important and permanent advantages for her, the government was dissatisfied. To forestall the danger of Germany becoming isolated, Bismarck concluded with Austria-Hungary the classic treaty of alliance of 1879.

In its original form the treaty was directed against the threat of Russian aggression, while in case of an attack by a third power against one of the allies the others would maintain friendly neutrality — unless Russia was brought in. In this case armed support would be called for. Thus, safeguards against an attack by France (Germany's main concern) were weaker than against one by Russia (Austria's chief problem). Bismarck was not too fearful of losing Russian friendship by the treaty, for in June 1881 he succeeded in forming the "Three Emperors' League" between Germany, Austria, Russia, a secret pact of neutrality which not only did much to restore a more amicable atmosphere between Austria and Russia, but would also permit Germany to act as a mediator in case relations might once more deteriorate.

The French occupation of Tunis, long coveted by Italy, in 1881, led to dangerous tensions between the two countries. Also grievances against Austria still existed in Italy. There was much agitation in favour of wresting from her the Italian speaking provinces, *Italia Irredenta*, "unredeemed Italy". But in 1882 Italy joined the German-Austrian pact of 1879, widening it to the "Triple Alliance". Concluded for five years and several times renewed, till 1915, it made possible a restraining influence on Italy and thus helped to improve Austrian-Italian relations.

When Russia refused to renew the Three Emperors' League, in 1887, Bismarck agreed with the Russian Foreign Minister Baron Nicolai Kar-



lovich de Giers on a secret "Reinsurance Treaty" instead, concluded for three years. This is perhaps the most famous treaty of Bismarck's career. Though not a full substitute for the defunct Three Emperors' League it was, under the given circumstances, the best that could be obtained. Russia and Germany promised each other friendly neutrality in case of attack by a third power. This meant for Germany that in case of French aggression she was secure from an attack from the east; for Russia, that Germany would not support Austria if she were to attack her. Thus Russia was covered against aggression from Germany's closest ally, Austria-Hungary, by Germany herself. Such a treaty might have prevented the world war in 1914. Vice versa, Austria was covered against Russian attack by the Triple Alliance. By thus always siding against the aggressor, Bismarck had ensured for Germany a moderating influence upon all sides in the interest of peace.

Russia was also protected against England, while the Mediterranean Entente of 1887, encouraged by Bismarck, protected England's claims against Russia in Egypt. Most important, the Reinsurance Treaty did away with Russian feelings of isolation which, regardless of the prevailing form of government, is a standing feature, almost a complex in the Russian political character. The Reinsurance Treaty even provided an indirect guarantee for France, because for the case of a German attack against her, Bismarck conceded to the Russians a free hand. Russia was also given guarantees in regard to the Dardanelles Straits.

"A man like you", said Count von Caprivi to Bismarck whom he succeeded as Reich Chancellor, "can play with five balls simultaneously, while other people are well advised to limit themselves to one or two."

Defensive treaties have their main value in preventing war. Bismarck strongly rejected the idea of fighting so-called "preventive" wars, recommended because at some later date one might have to fight anyway under less favourable circumstances. He considered preventive war not only the height of folly but a blasphemous interference with the will of Providence.

Bismarck's treaty system was entirely defensive in nature. An act of aggression on the part of Germany would have released her allies from all obligations, and vice versa. A just appraisal of his nineteen years of chancellorship must recognize that at home, despite all his mistakes, he laid a solid base for democracy and social progress. We must also acknowledge that his genius in foreign policy, his flexibility, tact and knowledge of men and history, ensured for the heart of Europe one of her longest periods of peace and progress, forty four years, while



elsewhere the Russians, British, Americans, Spaniards, Italians, Turks and French, not to mention the "colonial" peoples, suffered wars and conflict in abundance.

In 1888, within the span of three months, the reins of government passed from the hands of a monarch, ninety one years of age to his twenty nine year old grandson, William II, henceforth German Emperor and King of Prussia. His father Emperor Frederick III was marked by death when he succeeded William I on March 9 of that year. He ruled for ninety-nine days only. Frederick was a man of liberal convictions. While his attitude as well as that of the Empress — eldest daughter of Queen Victoria of England — had never been cordial towards Bismarck, he had the good sense to keep the proven servant of his father and of Germany in office.

Under the young emperor, however, the conflict broke out openly. It resulted from difference in character and age, and from divergent evaluations of the political and social situation. The emperor, who was not free from inferiority feelings (perhaps due partly to one of his arms being crippled from birth), felt overshadowed by Bismarck's power and international prestige. In the field of social legislation he wanted to proceed at a faster pace than Bismarck considered politic. Bismarck was rooted in the traditions of a more frugal time, while William II adored the glamour of world-trade, maritime enterprises and modern big industry — anything that might impress England. His relations with his mother had been rather unhappy, which may explain his ambivalent attitude toward Britain — greatly admiring everything British and yet with an anti-British sentiment. Bismarck, on the other hand, did not permit himself personal feelings in relation to foreign powers. "Sentimental politics", as he called it, seemed to him illicit and dangerous.

Emperor William II (1888—1918, d. 1941) was no less devoted than Bismarck to the maintenance of peace. To describe him as a "war monger" bent on world conquest was an invention of World War I propaganda. Such allegations still creep up here and there, but the leading historians of England and America have long since attested the falsehood of such accusations. As the late president of Columbia University in New York, Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, Nobel prize winner for peace, has put it:

"It will never be possible to persuade me that William II was the warlord that the newspapers persistently represented. He never mentioned war in any of his talks with me except to decry it, and the whole of his interest was in matters of social progress and educational advancement."



age. That the Kaiser was absolutely absorbed in the happiness, prosperity and prestige of the German people is quite certain." Butler, who knew the emperor intimately for eight years, was also impressed how well he was informed in regard to everything that was going on in the intellectual and scientific life of Germany. Had he not been a reigning monarch, Butler concludes, he might readily have made his mark as a man of letters.

However, the emperor was apt to be impulsive and carried away by a frequently too pompous manner of speech. Such ill-placed rhetorics did much harm to himself and to the cause of his country, furnishing the enemies of Germany with eagerly sought for arguments for labeling her policies as aggressive, and their own war preparations as necessary defensive measures.

The young emperor hoped that by scrapping the antisocialist laws and by convening an international conference on labour questions, he might succeed in breaking into the ranks of the Social Democrats. His ideal was to establish his reputation as a "workers' emperor". Bismarck considered this policy as too hasty and therefore ill advised. The conference, the first of its kind, attended by representatives from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, England, France, Holland, Italy and Switzerland, opened in Berlin on March 15, 1890.

On the same day, a fateful climax was reached in the relations of the two men when the emperor demanded of Bismarck the rescinding of a royal cabinet order of 1852 which defined the position of the prime minister. Bismarck had invoked this order to reassert his authority over the cabinet, which had been weakened by the young emperor's interference. The order provided that, before a member of the cabinet could report to the sovereign directly, the prime minister must be informed on the question so that he could be present, even if the sovereign had asked for such a report. Only on this basis was a responsible conduct of affairs by the prime minister possible. Bismarck refused to comply and, in fact, the order was not cancelled then or later.

Hostility between sovereign and chancellor was aggravated by further incidents. But the final break was a result of incompatibility of character rather than any single event.

Bismarck's dismissal was rude and undignified. The man who had founded the German Reich and led it to be an internationally respected power, was virtually ejected from his offices where he had worked to the benefit of the country for so many years. In accepting the commanded resignation on March 20, 1890 the emperor bestowed on Bismarck the



title of a Duke of Lauenburg. Without hesitation Bismarck declined, seeing in the proffered "grace" an attempt to deprive him of the name under which he had won world fame.

It so happened that just at the time of this dismissal the Russian ambassador, Count Paul Shuvalov, presented himself to Bismarck to negotiate the renewal of the Reinsurance Treaty, which expired in June 1890. History would perhaps consider this fateful, Bismarck wrote prophetically about the incident, seeing that the negotiations came to naught because he did not remain chancellor.

With Bismarck, his son Herbert, then secretary of foreign affairs, also left office. There were no successors to carry on. General von Caprivi whom the emperor appointed in Bismarck's stead, lacked political experience.

"Dropping the Pilot" as Sir John Tenniel, the accomplished artist of the British weekly "Punch", called his famous cartoon — the old experienced pilot of a generation, Bismarck stepping down the side of the ship, while coming onto the quarterdeck to take command was the figure of the young emperor.

German foreign policy became unstable and floundering. Much of this has been attributed to the "Gray Eminence" of the Wilhelmstrasse — the German Foreign Office — Baron von Holstein, an official of medium rank. Holstein was Russophobe and believed that England could be "bossed" into friendliness. His knowledge of intimate details in the private life of high officials contributed to the influence which he exercised over a period of sixteen years. That the Reinsurance Treaty was not renewed was largely his doing.

Holstein's diaries, recently published, seem to indicate however, that his influence has been overrated. He was merely a symbol of something more general. As German foreign policy from then on lacked vision and direction, a stale bureaucrat, who believed international relations could be handled by abstract formulas, could gain undue influence. The emperor had met Holstein only once, for Holstein never joined court circles. He preferred to work in seclusion, which increased his reputation as the mystery man of the German foreign office.

Bismarck's forebodings proved justified. Barely a year after his dismissal, France and Russia held their first talks, which in 1894 led to a political and military agreement. For Germany this meant the virtual loss of her eastern ally. At the same time British-German estrangement increased, which only a temporary improvement by the Helgoland Treaty



of 1890. This island off the north German coast, held by England since 1815, was exchanged for the island of Zanzibar off the coast of German East Africa. This, at the time, was considered an exorbitant price to pay for British friendship.

With Germany's growing isolation the weight of her Austrian ally also grew. In 1896, when the Triple Alliance was up for renewal, Austria demanded amendments that would guarantee German support for her expansion in the Balkans. This Prince Chlodwig zu Hohenlohe, Reich Chancellor since 1894, refused to concede.

Under Hohenlohe's chancellorship German social legislation took an important step forward. The rights of assembly and coalition were extended to permit all types of association, in 1899, thus meeting some of the socialist demands. Also two German naval laws, in 1898 and 1900, were passed while he was chancellor. The name of Alfred von Tirpitz, then Naval Secretary and later Grand Admiral, is intimately connected with the German naval program. What Tirpitz had in mind was not so much to challenge British supremacy on the seven seas — this would have been completely unrealistic — but rather the so-called "theory of risks". The German navy was to be so strong that no other power, not even the strongest, would be able to attack it without risking its own existence.

Hohenlohe's successor as Reich chancellor was Count (later Prince) Bernhard von Bülow, till 1909. After him Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg held this office until 1917.

Bismarck died in 1898, Hohenlohe in 1901, a few months after resigning his office. With these two men there passed the last exponents of the founding-period of the German Reich.

The century did not end without seeing reborn, in the midst of a world of rivaling national states, a feeling that a new international or supranational legality was necessary. Here too, the year 1848 with its revival of universal ideas had been a landmark. The first international peace congress at Brussels in 1848, privately organized, demanded international arbitration, a congress of the peoples, and general disarmament. A further step was taken towards limiting the abuses of sovereignty by the protocol to the Declaration of Paris, in 1856, after the Crimean War. The rules of sea warfare were humanized, and provisions were drafted for securing the good offices of friendly states before resorting to war. The Geneva Convention of 1864, called upon Dunant's initiative and attended by fifteen nations "for the amelioration of the conditions of soldiers wounded in the field" (Red Cross Convention), as well as



subsequent conventions yielded lasting results and created genuine international law.

Throughout the last decades of the nineteenth century the efforts of high-minded individuals and groups were directed unceasingly towards setting up rules for lawful international behaviour. In the German, French, British and other parliaments demands for disarmament, for arbitration, even for a United States of Europe were raised time and again.

On August 24, 1898 a manifesto of Tsar Nicholas II of Russia invited the powers to assemble for the purpose of discussing international peace. The First Hague Conference met in 1899, the second one which was also called by the Tsar on American initiative, in 1907.

The "Hague Convention on Land War Fare", as the work of these Conferences is summarily called today, was an important step in the right direction, namely, toward a civilized and lawful exercise of military power over conquered territory and a defeated enemy. Also the idea of international arbitration was revived at the Hague.

## XVII

### EUROPE'S ROAD TO WAR

It was a beautiful continent, this Europe during the last years preceding the first world war. All countries, with the exception of Russia and Turkey, were accessible without a passport, all currencies were freely convertible. As in the days of Occidental unity during the Middle Ages, German youth migrated all over Europe freely to any universities of their own choosing, while countless students from abroad and overseas flocked to the German schools of higher learning.

It was also a period of rising prosperity for the broad masses. The deproletarianization of the proletariat, goal of democratic socialists as well as Christian social teachings had by then gone a long way towards its realization.

The German Youth Movement — associations of the young eager to live their lives under their own free responsibility — established a bridge to the young generation of other European nations. Germany's "Youth Hostel Movement", providing clean, inexpensive homes for wandering youths, has meanwhile spread over the whole world.

However, there was also an overrating of progress in the material



sense. The struggles and sufferings of history seemed to belong to the past. From now on, so that generation believed, mankind would surely move forward from the technical achievements of today to the ever greater ones of tomorrow.

There were, of course, wars in the Far East, the colonies, even in Europe's own back-yard, the Balkans: the Italian-Turkish war, 1911—12; the First Balkan War, Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece versus Turkey, 1912; the Second Balkan War, Bulgaria versus Serbia, Greece, also against Rumania and Turkey in 1913. But no one could visualize a general war, or what it would mean, much less that it might plunge this modern world, with all its materialistic civilisation, back into frightful barbarism. Perhaps there were some moments here and then when a glare from the abyss penetrated into this world of selfcontentment — when the beautiful Empress Elisabeth of Austria, wife of Francis Joseph, was murdered by an anarchist in 1898; or during the Russo-Japanese war 1904—1905, with revolutionary movements in Russia, bloodshed, general strikes, and in October 1905, the first workers' "soviets".

In 1908, when Francis Joseph celebrated his sixtieth jubilee as emperor, Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, provinces with a southern Slav population. They were formerly part of the Ottoman empire, and had been under Austrian military administration since 1878. Serbia and Montenegro which coveted these provinces were seized by war fever. But Russia, the "great Slav brother", "protector of the Balkan Slavs and Orthodox Christians", was still weakened by the events of 1904/05 and thus unable to intervene. But the crisis increased tension with Russia — a contributing factor for the world war in 1914.

After protracted negotiations to reestablish friendlier relations with Russia, Emperor William II took a personal initiative. While cruising in the Finnish Gulf, he met the Tsar on his yacht and invited him back on his own. There he proposed a treaty of mutual aid, to which both monarchs affixed their signatures. This is the Treaty of Björkö of July 1904.

It remained ineffective though, since both Reich Chancellor Prince Bülow and the Russian government objected — the former because it was limited to Europe, the latter because of French protests.

Since April 1904 there existed an Anglo-French *entente*, a loose understanding on matters of common interest. It resulted in a complete settlement of all colonial differences and in 1906, in an Anglo-French military convention providing for close cooperation in case of war. The deadly ring began to be closed when in August 1907 a full British-Russian under-



standing was reached. Now there existed a tripartite French-British-Russian entente directed against the Central Powers — the German Reich and Austria-Hungary.

For Austria the Balkan problem was of vital importance. If Russia established itself as the recognized protector of the Balkan Slavs, this would influence the northern and western Slavs under Habsburg rule as well.

The Czech national movement, under the learned Thomas G. Masaryk, professor of philosophy at Prague University, and his young assistant, the French educated Eduard Beneš, had already become a power with which the Austrian government must reckon. Yet until almost the end of the first world war the majority of the Austrian Slavs, Croatsians, Slovenians, Poles, Slovaks, even the Czechs, remained loyal to the imperial-royal government.

The pro-Austrian Slavs were hoping for a position equal to that of the German Austrians and the Hungarians, once the heir to the throne, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand would become Emperor. He was marriedmorganatically with Countess Sophie Chotek of Czech extraction. (After the marriage she was given the title of Princess, then of Duchess of Hohenberg.)

Under Bülow's chancellorship social legislation moved further ahead. In 1900, accident insurance was extended to cover additional occupations. An amended Old Age and Invalidity Law increased pensions. Compulsory social insurance was extended. In 1908, more stringent rules were introduced against any abuse of children's and women's labour.

But Bülow was not the man to master the onrushing storm. He was vain and ambitious, elegantly moving between the parties and ready, if it suited his purpose, to compromise the prestige of the Crown. This happened in 1908 during the so-called "Daily Telegraph affair", after an interview with the emperor in which he had been critical about England. Bülow had the responsibility for this publication, but by only weakly defending the emperor, he in practice put the blame on him. William II never quite recovered from this loss of face.

The anti-German powers penetrated into the Triple Alliance when, on November 1, 1902, Italy and France reached a secret understanding to the effect that, even if France "compelled in defence of her honour or her security" should take the initiative of a declaration of war, Italy would remain neutral.

The clumsy conduct of foreign policy worked against Germany, even where she was acting within her rights, as during the First and Second



Moroccan crises (1905 and 1911). The French had wantonly excluded Germany from negotiations about Morocco. So in 1905 the emperor in person appeared at Tangier, reluctantly so, but persuaded by Bülow and Holstein, and declared himself in favour of Moroccan independence and equal opportunity for all. This created a panic in Paris, and it drew France and Britain even more closely together. In 1909 a French-German agreement was reached, which reaffirmed the integrity and independence of Morocco. Germany received parts of the French Congo connecting her colony of Cameroon with the Congo and Ubangi rivers. The agreement also recognized the special political interests of France as well as Germany's economic interests. When France never properly respected this, as far as Germany was concerned, the German gunboat *Panther* was sent to Agadir. But the final outcome of this second Moroccan crisis was that Germany had to give up whatever claims she had, and in addition earned the reputation of playing with war.

The *Panther* move was highly unrealistic and therefore politically disastrous. For already at the Algeiras Conference of 1906, in the train of the first Moroccan crisis, Germany had been faced by a solid French-British-Russian front joined even by her "ally" Italy. It would have been best to withdraw entirely from the spheres of interest in North Africa, which Bismarck had wisely assigned to France as a substitute for Alsace-Lorraine.

Up to the very threshold of war there were efforts to ward the catastrophe off. In February 1912 the British Secretary for War, Lord Haldane, visited Berlin, with a view of settling British-German differences arising from the German naval programme, perhaps as a countermove against the onesidedly pro-French policy of Foreign Secretary Sir Eduard Grey. But the conversations failed. Since Agadir a war atmosphere had developed in England. There now existed detailed strategic plans agreed upon in Paris by the general staffs during a visit by the British Chief of Staff. They provided for joint operations on land. The strength of the British expeditionary corps for Northern France was fixed at six divisions. Perhaps war at that time was avoided only because a severe crisis developed, when Russia in November 1911 interfered with affairs in Persia and thereby with British interests.

Head of the war party in the British cabinet was Winston Churchill, then first lord of the admiralty. His group was strengthened by the failure of the Lord Haldane mission, while in Germany suspicion was rife that Haldane, holding out insincere promises of a future understanding had only come in order to retard the German naval program.



Russian foreign policy was to a large extent determined by continued inner unrest. To distract the minds of the people from revolutionary activities at home, successes had to be sought abroad, and this was possible only by drawing even more closely to France. This again fitted into the pattern of French policy as directed by Georges Clemenceau, Minister President from 1906 to 1909 and of Raymond Poincaré, first Minister President and Foreign Minister, then since 1913, President of the Republic. Only with the help of Russia could France hope to regain Alsace-Lorraine. In 1913 the French-Russian military agreement was amended, and strategic plans for joint operations were drawn up.

Still, war had not become inevitable yet. England which held the decisive position had not committed herself definitely. Without her help, Russia and France, inspite of their vast numerical superiority, could not dare to attack. Whoever visits Turkey today and is told that the tracks he just crossed are those of the "Baghdad-Railway", will find it hard to appreciate that the construction of this means of communication (still in perfect condition) should have been a contributing factor to British-German and Russian-German tensions and thereby to the outbreak of the first world war. As late as June 15, 1914 an Anglo-German agreement was initialed. It settled the Baghdad Railway dispute and promised to lead to further détente. Also, inspite of the Russo-Austrian tension and Russia's position on the side of France, Germany kept the "wire to St. Petersburg" open. But Tsar Nicholas II (1894—1917) was not a personality of the rank of his predecessors with whom Bismarck dealt so successfully. Emperor William II greatly overrated the Tsar's influence, as shown already by the abortive treaty of Björkö.

Also in 1914, a British-German agreement was reached on the future of the Portuguese colonies, but was delayed under French and Russian pressure.

The turning point of modern history — and for the worse — was reached on the 28th of June, 1914. On that day Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife, the Duchess of Hohenberg, were assassinated at Sarajevo, in the Austrian province of Bosnia, by young Serb terrorists. That Austria could not passively accept pan-Slav terror on its territory was a matter of course. To demand and to receive appropriate amends for that dastardly crime was a matter of life or death for the Dual Monarchy.

World opinion at first was clearly on the side of Austria. A change came after a sharply worded Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, on July 23, of which the Vienna government had failed to inform its German ally in



time. Serbia's conciliatory reply was held back for three days by the Austrian foreign minister, Count Leopold von Berchthold. It became known in Berlin only on July 27, too late for an effective intervention. "With this reply in hand", Emperor William II commented, "I would never have ordered mobilization."

The emperor realized that a war between Austria and Serbia would bring in Russia, the "protector of the Balkan Slavs and of Orthodox Christians". Nor did he doubt that a Russo-Austrian conflict would set the military machine of the Russo-French agreements in motion. If final evidence was needed, it was furnished by the visit of President Raymond Poincaré to St. Petersburg on July 20. At the end of the three days visit, the obligations imposed upon both countries by their treaties of mutual military aid were solemnly reaffirmed.

Austria-Hungary was Germany's last ally. She was the weaker partner in the alliance, but this, paradoxically as it may sound, helped her to take the lead during that fateful crisis. Germany feared losing Austria and being left completely alone to face a hostile coalition. Bismarck, aware of the empirical law that in coalitions it is usually the weaker partner that leads, had tried to keep the German-Austrian relations well in hand. For the same reason he had been anxious to act as mediator whenever necessary. This was no longer possible. Berlin, it is true, counseled moderation in Vienna, but not vigourosly enough lest Austria should reverse her alliances. For similar reasons also England failed to bring stronger pressure to bear on Russia to restrain her from taking irrevocable measures against the Central Powers.

On July 28, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. The German government at once urged Vienna to make it known that no annexation of Serbian territory was contemplated and that the campaign, a punitive expedition rather than a war, would be halted in Belgrade. This course of action was favoured also by the British foreign secretary, Sir Eduard Grey.

On July 29, the weak Tsar Nicholas II ordered the mobilization of the Russian army. And then the system of alliances began to swing into operation, with deadly precision. On July 31, Germany proclaimed a "state of threatening danger of war". By ultimatum Russia was requested to stop at once her aggressive preparations at the German and Austrian borders. Emperor William's last telegram to the Tsar, dated August 1, implored him in almost pathetic words to stop the march of the Russian troops. Finally, on that day when at seven o'clock in the evening no reply had been received, the German Reich declared war on Russia.



On that same August 1, three fifty five in the afternoon, France decreed general mobilization. A few hours later Germany followed. To a German enquiry, dispatched on July 31, as to the attitude of France in regard to a possible war between Germany and Russia, the reply was that France would be guided by her own interests alone. On August 3, in the certain knowledge that she would go to the assistance of Russia, Germany declared war on France.

When German troops on their way to France crossed into the territory of neutral Belgium, on August 3, — a gross mistake on the part of Germany in view of the weight of imponderables in international politics — England declared war on August 4. The violation of Belgian neutrality had furnished the war party with the final arguments in favour of armed intervention.

The publication of the documents of the foreign offices of the major powers has proven abundantly that there was no particularly German "war guilt". Of course, the fact that it was Germany who declared war first made it easy for allied propaganda, with its control of the world news services, to spread the falsehood that Germany had also planned, and wilfully started a war "for world conquest".

The Central Powers had nothing to gain from war, but everything to lose. Germany was a "saturated" state, while Austria exposed to a permanent overt act of aggression by pan-Slavism, acted in selfdefence — unwisely, to be sure, but certainly not aggressively, let alone with the intention of territorial conquest.

Russia, on the other hand, or at least the "war party" under Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaievich, could realize her ambition in the West only at the expense of Austria-Hungary and Turkey. The famous Russian Crown Council of February 21, 1914 had concluded that the road to Constantinople and overlordship over the Slav world must lead through a European war. In the Far East the Russian path had been blocked by the Japanese victory of 1905.

In France, the never extinct will of revenge could be satisfied only by war which might lead to the reconquest of Alsace-Lorraine.

The first world war was certainly not a war for principles, as allied propaganda claimed. It had nothing to do with "democracy versus autocracy". On the side of the western allies was Russia with the most autocratic of all governments, while the Central Powers were basically parliamentary, moving steadily forward on the road of liberal, socially progressive democracy.



All this has become abundantly clear also due to the impartial studies by British and American historians. There would be no need to emphasize it again, had not the misdeeds of National Socialism, retroactively, as it were, distorted the historic facts of the past. Since then it has become customary, also in circles who know better, or at least should know better, to speak of the "two" wars started by Germany in the twentieth century. Sometimes, even the defensive war against Napoleonic France, in 1870, is thrown in for good measure, to make it "three" aggressions. But surely all this propaganda will dissolve again some day in the clear light of historic truth.

## XVIII

### THE FIRST WORLD WAR

"We are not moved by desire for conquest", Emperor William II said in his address to the Reichstag, on August 4, 1914. At this session the Reichstag voted unanimously in favour of the war credits. Also among the Social Democrats, with 110 seats the strongest party representing four and a quarter million voters mainly of the working class, there was not one dissenting voice.

The declaration of the Social Democratic party in the Reichstag, on the same day, reflected a justified fear that the German workers, should they sabotage their country's war effort, could not count on a sufficiently strong response from across the frontiers. They would not bring about a peace according to the ideas of the Workers International (the Second International founded in Paris in 1889) but merely a quick defeat of Germany. While pointing to the social achievements at home, which were well worth defending, the declaration also insisted on a purely defensive war, without annexations or aggrandizement.

The German plan of campaign had been drafted in 1905 by Field Marshal Count Alfred von Schlieffen, chief of the general staff from 1891 to 1906. It called for a strategy like the one employed by Hannibal in the battle of Cannae against the Romans in 216 b. C., but of course on a vast scale. A powerful right wing was to break through northward to the Channel ports in a flanking movement, attacking Paris from the west. A weak left wing should engage French attention in the south along the Franco-German border. This plan demanded boldness — massing practic-



ally all available strength in the north, while taking a calculated risk in the south.

Another grave risk had to be taken on the eastern front. Comparatively weak German forces should fight delaying actions against the vastly superior Russian armies, until France was defeated and the bulk of the German army could be transferred east.

This plan took the existing political situation into account. The entente of France and Russia would force Germany to fight on two fronts. What the Schlieffen plan tried was to make the best of this grim prospect — a plan of desperation, one might say, certainly not a plan for world conquest. France was considered militarily an equal, while Russia's armies, though not at par with Germany's were twice as strong numerically.

A nephew of the great Field Marshal Helmut von Moltke, the general by the same name who succeeded Schlieffen as chief of staff altered his predecessor's plan by timorously removing several divisions from the right wing to reinforce the left. Two army corps were dispatched to the east. Thus, the German offensive in France, very successful at first, bogged down after a few weeks and was turned back at the battle of the Marne from September 5 to 12, probably due to a chain of mistakes and miscalculations on the part of the German high command. A protracted war of positions began, with millions of casualties on both sides. During the next three years the front line changed for no more than ten miles in either direction.

Meanwhile, the huge Russian armies had penetrated deeply into Austria. They broke through the Carpathians, and on September 24, reached the northern provinces of Hungary. East Prussia was invaded by General Pawel Karlowitch Rennenkampf. When he defeated the German Eighth Army in the battle of Gumbinnen on the 19th and 20th of August, 1914, it seemed inevitable to take the German front back to the Vistula river, abandoning East Prussia. But an ingenious plan of operation drafted by Colonel (later General) Max Hoffmann permitted the new commander-in-chief, General (later Field Marshal) Paul von Beneckendorf und Hindenburg, and his chief of staff General Erich Ludendorff, to reverse the trend.

In the battle of Tannenberg, from August 26 to 30, the Russian second army under General Sansonov, operating from the southeast, was completely defeated. 100 000 prisoners were taken. The battle at the Masurian lakes (September 6 to 15), another German victory, left 125 000 prisoners in their hands, while the winter battle of Masuria (February 4 to 22, 1915) with another 100 000 prisoners, liberated East Prussia.



During that winter, the Russians were rolled back also at the Austrian front with terrible losses on both sides. By autumn 1915, Lithuania, Poland, and Curland were in German hands, and by the end of that year Serbia had been taken by Austria, while Montenegro capitulated.

Despite these successes, a military victory seemed out of reach after the battle of the Marne. To bring the war to an honourable close promptly without annexations on either side, should have been the one concern of German political leadership.

The Emperor's influence on the conduct of the war was practically nil. Neither did he have much to say, since the war had come, in political decisions, which were more and more determined by the military who made and unmade the chancellors. After Bethmann-Hollweg's resignation in 1917, Dr. Georg Michaelis, politically a nonentity, was appointed by the Emperor, upon the suggestion of the high command. He was followed in 1918 by the aged Count Georg von Hertling, a right wing member of the Center party, formerly Bavarian minister president.

In the autumn of 1914, the Central Powers were joined by Turkey, in October 1915 by Bulgaria. Italy, on the other hand, refused to honour its obligations under the Triple Alliance, but addressed exorbitant demands on Austria instead — the cession of the South Tirol, of Istria with Trieste and of the Dalmatian islands.

Under the influence of a former socialist leader, Benito Mussolini, the war party gained steadily in strength, until Italy finally declared war against Austria on May 23, 1915 against the German Reich on August 28, 1916.

In the end all countries of the world had declared war on, or at least severed diplomatic relations with Germany, Austria, Turkey, and Bulgaria, with the exception of the three Scandinavian kingdoms, Holland, Switzerland and Spain as well as Persia, Afghanistan, Argentina, Chile, and Venezuela.

Two fundamental mistakes probably contributed most toward the catastrophic outcome of the war. Firstly, German diplomacy underestimated the political importance of the United States, just as the German high command underrated its military potential. Had America remained neutral, a negotiated peace, which always ought to be the aim of good statesmanship, might have been possible. Of course, long before the United States declared war on April 6, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson's attitude had left little doubt in Britain and France that America, which from the beginning had assisted them with loans and arms, would eventually join also militarily. This conviction worked against a negotiated



peace. American public opinion was systematically incensed by fantastic propaganda stories of alleged German atrocities. They continued to poison the atmosphere, long after scholars and students of German affairs had proved them baseless.

American divisions did not make their appearance on the Western front in sizable number until May, 1918; then they quickly became decisive.

The second fatal German mistake was the handling of Russia. As late as 1916 there was a chance for a separate peace. The Tsar and Tsarina — a Princess of Hesse-Darmstadt — were peacefully minded and rather pro-German. So was the Russian minister president, Baron Boris Stürmer. However, the negotiations conducted in great secrecy in Stockholm came to nought when the high command insisted on detaching Poland from Russia. On November 5, 1916 the emperors William and Francis Joseph proclaimed the "Kingdom of Poland". This was one of the Austrian emperor's last acts of government. He died on November 21, 1916, eighty six years old. A Polish State Council was formed in Warsaw, but the hoped-for result, Polish volunteers on a large scale to fight against Russia, did not materialize.

Emperor Charles I of Austria, King of Hungary (1916—18, d. 1922), who succeeded his grand-uncle Francis Joseph, was anxious to terminate the war. This he made clear already in his proclamation when he ascended the throne. A German peace note of December 12, 1916, addressed to the United States, then still neutral, seems to have been correlated with this. Germany indicated her willingness to negotiate for peace, but the move brought no response.

Emperor Charles's secret negotiations, from February till June 1917, conducted with the French and British governments through his brother-in-law Prince Sixtus of Bourbon-Parma (a brother of Empress Zita), ended in failure and did much to undermine the position of the Central Powers. Meanwhile the disintegration of the multinational Habsburg state, encouraged by the Allies, proceeded from within. On June 30, 1918 Italy and France, followed by Britain on August 13 and the United States on September 3, recognized an as yet non-existent "Czechoslovak Republic". The Austrian Slavs in all parts of the Dual Monarchy were recognized as "belligerent".

With the exception of East Africa, where General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck maintained himself to the end, all German colonies in Africa and Asia were lost within a few months to the Western Allies and to Japan, which declared war on August 23, 1914. German troops were fighting



also at many other fronts, in Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Palestine, finally in Finland.

The strategic value of the German navy proved not to be what Tirpitz had been hoping for. However the defensive victory of the German High Seas Fleet in the battle of Jutland (or Skagerrak) on May 31 and June 1, 1915 against the vastly superior British Grand Fleet saved the German coasts from any possible British landing attempts.

The Allies clamped down an almost airtight blockade which the German fleet could not break. Already in 1916 food supplies for the civilian population began to be inadequate. By late autumn of 1917 privations in many parts of Germany and Austria were approaching the unendurable, and during the dismal winter that followed matters became still worse. The morale of the people was gradually worn down.

In March 1917, the Russian monarchy collapsed. A provisional government under Prince George Lvov and Alexander Kerenski, minister president since July 20, 1917, carried on the war. But their offensives, although launched without regard to human losses, ended in demoralizing defeats.

With the idea of destroying the pro-Allied provisional government from within by means of a powerful "fifth column", the German high command, upon Ludendorff's advice transported Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov Lenin and other extremists from their Swiss exile via Germany to Russia in sealed carriages. The official Soviet newspaper *Pravda* received large subsidies from German sources. Lenin's ablest supporter was Leon Trotsky, later commissar for foreign affairs. He was the man who organized the Red Army.

The Bolshevik revolution of November 1917 is a landmark in history. From then on there existed a Communist government, dedicated to a programme of world domination to be brought about by all and any means — revolutionary activities, propaganda, economic pressure, unscrupulous exploitation of social, national, or any other grievances and last not least, by violence from within with the help of the Red Army from without. This regime gradually extended its power over one sixth of the earth.

To gain time to consolidate its grip on Russia, the Bolshevik government headed by Lenin and including Trotsky and Stalin was prepared to enter into peace talks with the Central Powers. An armistice was arranged in December 1917, followed on March 3, 1918 by the peace treaty of Brest Litowsk. A separate peace was signed with the Ukraine, and Russia also lost Poland and the Baltic provinces.



The Bolshevik leaders, putting their trust in the "inevitability of the proletarian revolution" as taught by Marx, expected all these territories to return to Russia in due time. Should Germany herself become communist, so Lenin said, the whole of Europe would soon follow — to be controlled, of course, by Moscow.

On May 7, 1917, the Peace of Bucarest was concluded with Rumania, defeated in a few months after she had declared war on Austria on August 27, 1916. Rumania had to cede the Dobrudja to Bulgaria, but retained Bessarabia, formerly a Russian province which had proclaimed its union with Rumania.

On June 19, 1917 the German Reichstag passed its famous peace resolution with a large majority of 212 votes of the Center party, the Socialists and the National Liberals, against 126 of the Conservatives. Taking up the message of the address from the throne of August 4, 1914 that Germany was not moved by any desire for conquest, the resolution also stated: "The Reichstag is striving for a peace of mutual understanding leading to a permanent reconciliation of the peoples. Cessions of territory imposed by force as well as political, economic, or financial oppression are incompatible with a peace of this kind. The Reichstag equally rejects all plans at economic isolation or hostility between the peoples after the war. The freedom of the seas must be safeguarded. Only an economic peace will provide a basis for the peoples to live together in friendship." The resolution added: "The Reichstag will actively promote the creation of an international organisation."

One can easily see that the principles enunciated here by the Reichstag were very similar in spirit to President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points contained in his Message to Congress of January 8, 1918, the Atlantic Charter of August 1941, or today's charter of the United Nations.

The Reichstag resolution came at a time when negotiations were under way between the papal nuncio, then Eugenio Pacelli, later Pope Pius XII, and the German government. On August 1 Pope Benedict XV published his peace note, which suggested disarmament, international arbitration, freedom of the seas, renunciation of indemnities, evacuation of occupied territories, and a conciliatory examination of conflicting territorial claims.

Again unfortunately, nothing came of these efforts.

Meanwhile, despite the impressive successes in the east, conditions at the German home front grew steadily worse. A radical wing, calling themselves Independent Socialists (USP) had broken away from the Social Democratic party (SPD, or Majority Socialists). They finally numbered 44 members out of a total of 110. Karl Liebknecht (son of the so-



cialist leader Wilhelm Liebknecht) and the brilliant German-Jewish writer Rosa Luxemburg organized a militantly revolutionary group in 1917, the "Spartacists" named after the leader of the insurrectionary slaves in ancient Rome. This became the kernel of the German Communist party, an affiliate of the Communist International, under the control of Moscow.

In the spring of 1918, the German armies staged a last big offensive in the west, which once again brought them within sight of victory. According to Allied opinion, even a few of the cavalry divisions left in the Ukraine might then have been sufficient to break the British-French lines completely and to turn the tide in favour of the Central Powers.

But the Allied and the American armies, gaining a respite, were able to counterattack, and on August 8 they broke through the German lines east of Amiens. This was for the German army the "black day" from which it was not to recover.

In September and October 1918 Bulgaria and Turkey collapsed. This enabled the Allies to reopen the Balkan front, secure for themselves the rich Rumanian oil deposits, and attack Austria from the rear.

That unrestricted submarine warfare, which was introduced in January 1917 as a counter measure against the British blockade, would not force Britain to her knees became apparent within a few months. It merely helped to bring America into the war. Since the 8th of August 1918 at the latest it was obvious that the war was lost, notwithstanding the fact that, with the exception of a tiny corner in Alsace and in the South Tirol, not one enemy soldier was standing on German or Austro-Hungarian soil at the end of hostilities.

In September 1918 William II consented to an important change in the German constitution. Since he did not have legislative initiative as emperor, he used his position as king of Prussia to prompt the Bundesrat to transform Germany into a parliamentary, democratic monarchy. The chancellor and all cabinet members became directly responsible to the Reichstag. The power of declaring war, and concluding peace, thus far vested in the monarch, was transferred to the Reichstag and the Bundesrat. These changes, which became law on October 28, were in practice treated as in force from the beginning of that month.

On October, 3, the first parliamentary Reich chancellor took office, Prince Max of Baden, a cousin of the ruling grand duke. A man of liberal convictions, he was known as a friend of peace and international under-



standing. His cabinet included for the first time two Socialists, Philip Scheidemann and Gustav Bauer.

Prince Max wished to consolidate his position before appealing for an armistice. But General Ludendorff and the high command, changing from over-optimism to near panic, insisted that he must sue for peace at once. Field Marshal von Hindenburg repeated this request on October 3. Thus Prince Max dispatched the armistice offer, which was addressed to President Woodrow Wilson of the United States, a few hours after taking office. As a basis for the armistice and the peace, the German government accepted the Fourteen Points of January 8, 1918 and the rest of the program laid down in the President's subsequent pronouncements, particularly his address of September 27, 1918. Austria, too, appealed for an armistice on the same day.

An almost mystic aureola, as of a saviour and demiurge of peace, enhanced President Wilson at that time. In Germany it was honestly believed among all levels of the suffering, famine stricken people that the new order of freedom and peace, of which he had so nobly spoken, was near at hand. But even though Germany had become a parliamentary state, with Social Democrats participating in the government, the tone of Wilson's notes grew increasingly harsh until it was obvious that as a prerequisite for peace, he was driving at the overthrow of the monarchy.

On October 28, there occurred the first mutinies on the German high seas fleet, and on November 3 a revolt broke out among sailors in Kiel. Within a few days all of the North Sea ports were in the hands of the revolutionaries. In Munich the Socialist leader Kurt Eisner, without consulting with his party members in the imperial cabinet, proclaimed the Bavarian Republic. By November 9, a cold and foggy day, only Königsberg and Breslau among the major cities were still unaffected by the rising tide of revolution. In Berlin, thousands of unarmed workers began marching towards the center of the city.

On October 29, Emperor William had left Berlin to return to his headquarters at Spa, on the Western front. The question of his abdication had become acute. He agreed in principle, then hesitated again. Prince Max, at noon, November 9, in a last attempt to save the monarchy before it would be overthrown by a revolutionary mob, announced on his own initiative, the abdication of the Emperor and King and the setting up of a regency. A German National Assembly was to be elected to decide upon the future constitution of the German people.

The last official act of Prince Max was to hand over the chancellor-



ship to the chairman of the Social Democratic party, Friedrich Ebert, an excellent man and true patriot, later the first Reich President.

The proclamation of the German Republic by Philipp Scheidemann, on November 9, was prompted by the fact that he became aware, from a window at the Reichstag building that at the far end of Unter den Linden, near the Royal Palace, Karl Liebknecht was about to proclaim the "German Soviet Republic".

"Was Germany then to be a Russian province", Scheidemann writes in his memoirs, "a Soviet dependency? No, no, a thousand times no! . . I saw the Russian madness staring me in the face — the bolshevik tyranny, a substitute for the despotism of the tsars! No, no, Germany should not suffer that on top of all her other miseries!"

Scheidemann's call, from the Reichstags balcony, "Long live the German Republic!" was taken up by the waiting masses outside. When Karl Liebknecht shortly afterwards attempted to proclaim a "Socialist Soviet Republic", with himself as president, this remained an episode. The day had been won for the democratic Republic.

An exchange of notes between the German and the Allied and Associated governments confirmed that Wilson's conditions of a peace based on national selfdetermination, without annexations or contributions, were accepted by both sides.

On the basis of this "Pre-Armistice Agreement", as it is called, the armistice was signed by Allied and German plenipotentiaries in the forest of Compiègne, on November 11, 1918. It entered into force at 11.55 a. m. on the same day.

## XIX

### VERSAILLES AND WEIMAR

It was a heavy mortgage on the young German Republic that the National Assembly meeting in Weimar, Goethe's city in Thuringia, had to bear the burden for the peace treaty signed in Louis' XIV palace at Versailles.

More effective than all revolutionary propaganda, Wilson's promises of a just peace had destroyed the will of the German people to continue the war. The specific conditions of these promises contained in the President's messages to Congress became international obligations by the Pre-Armistice Agreement, binding both upon the German and the Allied



and Associated Governments. That these obligations were in large part abandoned by the Allies after Germany had disarmed did much to shake the trust in democratic fair play.

The first of Wilson's Fourteen Points pledged "open covenants openly arrived at". At Versailles, however, where the peace conference began on January 18, 1919 — with seventy delegates representing twenty-seven of the victorious powers — the German delegates were not even admitted. On May 7, they were handed the peace conditions which had been worked out in secret by a Supreme Council, the "Big Ten" headed by Wilson.

The acceptance of Versailles, a dictate rather than a treaty, was forced upon the German National Assembly by the threat of a resumption of hostilities. This would have meant total occupation of disarmed Germany, the collapse of the democratic government just established and, in all certainty, the partitioning of the country. Such a policy was favoured by extremist French leaders like George Clemenceau, André Tardieu, and Marshall Ferdinand Foch, who largely dominated the Versailles conference. To detach the entire left bank of the Rhine from Germany and to set up as many "autonomous", meaning separatist, republics under French tutelage was one of their aims. The British prime minister David Lloyd George would have favoured a more moderate course, but he was hampered by rather demagogic promises he had made in the general elections of December 14, 1918, the so-called "khaki" elections. "Hang the Kaiser!", punishment of (German) "war criminals", full payment of all the costs of war, had been some of these slogans. Wilson proved helpless, perhaps even unwilling, to cope effectively with this situation. He apparently pinned all hope for the future on his plan for a League of Nations, which was established on January 25, 1919, but was not joined in the end by the United States itself.

Germany lost thirteen percent of her territory — 27,244 square miles with 6 475 000 inhabitants. The province of East Prussia was detached from the main body of Germany by the so-called Polish Corridor. No plebiscite was held to determine the will of the population in that broad strip of land. The rich industrial and mining province of Upper Silesia was partitioned in favour of Poland, even though a plebiscite had resulted in a 62 percent majority for Germany. The new state of Czechoslovakia, into which the Sudeten Germans were incorporated against their will, was given the Hultschin district detached from Silesia. The ancient Hanseatic port city of Danzig on the Baltic Sea was made a "free state", in customs union with Poland. The city of Memel founded



by the Teutonic Knights in 1252, at the extreme northeastern tip of East Prussia, was put under League of Nations control. In 1923 it was annexed by Lithuania.

In the West, Alsace-Lorraine was ceded to France. The little German counties of Eupen and Malmédy went to Belgium without a plebiscite. The French plan to annex the Saar basin outright was frustrated by Wilson. France was granted the exploitation of the coal mines in this rich industrial district, while the entirely German population of about one million was placed under League of Nations government. The French monetary system was introduced, and after fifteen years the people were to decide upon their political adherence by plebiscite.

The left bank of the Rhine, 12,526 square miles with 7.2 million inhabitants, was put under Allied-French occupation.

Germany lost all of her colonies, territories almost six times the size of the pre-war German Reich. Most of these are today independent states which maintain excellent relations with Germany. The propaganda stories about Germany having been unfit and unworthy to administer her colonies, circulated as a pretext for transferring them to the "mandatory" powers, could never be taken seriously.

Germany also had to hand over to the Allies all merchant ships of more than 1600 tons and, with the exception of a few small overaged craft, also her entire navy. The army was limited to 100 000 men. All heavy armaments such as big guns and tanks, as well as military aviation were prohibited. German disarmament, so the Versailles Treaty declared, was merely to be the beginning of a general disarmament by all nations, but this pledge was never kept.

On the east bank of the Rhine a strip of land, thirty one miles wide, was "demilitarized". The German rivers and the Kiel Canal — the busiest water way in the world — connecting the Baltic with the North Sea were internationalized.

Also the economic losses in coal, raw iron, zinc, in the production of steel and in agricultural products were staggering. They ranged up to 83 percent for zinc, 75 percent for iron ore. In addition, there were the so-called reparations. In 1921 the Reparations Commission in London fixed them at the tragicomic figure of one hundred and thirty two billion Goldmarks.

Not until 1930 did the last foreign soldier leave German soil, not until 1932 were the reparation payments brought to a halt which drained Germany without doing much good to the recipients and finally wrecked world economy.



Of far-reaching importance was the Versailles injunction against a voluntary union between the German provinces of the dismembered Habsburg monarchy and the German Republic. This violated the principle of national self-determination as pledged by Wilson's tenth point. Austria's preliminary constitution of November 12, 1918 had declared: "German Austria is a constituent part of the German Republic." Plebiscites held in various Alpine provinces brought overwhelming majorities for *Anschluss* with Germany, but they were prohibited by an Allied ultimatum. Even the freely chosen name of Deutsch-Österreich (German Austria) had to be changed to Österreich by virtue of the Treaty of Saint Germain imposed upon the little country on September 10, 1919.

Even more destructive than material burdens and losses was the notorious article 231, which stipulated that Germany and her allies were alone responsible for the war. This so-called war guilt clause came as a shock to the entire nation. It was resented as a falsehood and a humiliation, and it could not but discredit any government forced to affix its signature to it.

The Treaty was signed at Versailles in the Hall of Mirrors, on June 28, 1919 — on the fifth anniversary of the crime of Sarajevo. The German National Assembly at Weimar, under the threat of an Allied ultimatum, had accepted the treaty on June 22 by majority vote — 237 in favour, 138 opposing, with 5 abstentions.

The National Assembly promised by Reich chancellor Prince Max in his proclamation of November 9, 1918, had been elected on the basis of universal suffrage by all men and women over twenty years of age, on January 19, 1919. It convened at Weimar, on February 6. By its first legislative act, a law on the Provisional Reich Government, it established the parliamentary form of democracy. Friedrich Ebert on February 11 was elected to the office of Reich President, which he held until his untimely death on February 28, 1925. A former harness maker, Ebert had risen from the ranks of the trade unions and the Social Democratic party to be a member of the Reichstag since 1912. With republican dignity, non-partisan tact, and statesmanlike wisdom he discharged the duties of the supreme office.

It was in large part due to Friedrich Ebert that a National Assembly could be elected at all, because Germany was saved from becoming a Soviet type state ruled by the Communist party, under the slogan of a "dictatorship of the proletariat".

Under Ebert's chairmanship the provisional government, called Coun-



cil of People's Commissars (three majority socialists, three independent socialists) established in their very first proclamation on November 12, 1918 the principle of universal suffrage for all future elections, including that for the Constituent National Assembly.

This was the very opposite of what the left wing radicals wanted. On November 10, "Workers and Soldiers Councils" (soviets) were constituted in Berlin, and on the 19th a plenary meeting of these soviets violently objected to the proposed elections of the National Assembly. "All power to the soviets", was its demand instead, in accordance with the "principles of proletarian democracy". However, when the General Congress of the Workers and Soldiers Councils of Germany met in Berlin from December 16 to 19, 1918, they voted with an overwhelming majority — four hundred against fifty — in favour of a National Assembly to be elected on the basis of universal suffrage. Thus, the soviet system was rejected by the German soviets themselves.

Yet the extremists refused to give up. On December 30, at an all-German conference of the Spartacus League attended also by the Soviet Russian delegate Karl Radek, the German Communist party was founded and generously endowed with money channelled through the Soviet embassy in Berlin. The Spartacists were well armed, but their uprisings in Berlin and other cities and areas of Germany were put down by troops loyal to the democratic Republic.

In April 1919, the Communists overthrew the Bavarian Socialist government in Munich. A terroristic soviet regime was set up, which lasted four weeks until it was put down by loyal troops. Later there were communist uprisings in Hamburg, in the Ruhr district, in central Germany, and civil war flared up intermittently till 1923. In October and November 1923, Communist and left wing Socialist governments took power in Saxony and Thuringia, in open defiance of the Reich government.

Left wing radicalism played into the hands of right wing nationalism by helping it to regain some part of the position which it had lost altogether in November 1918. Also Hitler's National Socialist party founded in 1920 derived much psychological advantage from the existence of left wing extremism. Eventually, radicals of the left and the right were to make common cause for the destruction of the Republic, in the early thirties, and in August 1939 they agreed on the partitioning of Poland which brought on the second world war.

The nationalist and monarchist *Kapp putsch* (named after its leader Wolfgang Kapp) against the Republic in March 1920 broke down when the trade unions replied with a general strike.



In January 1919 Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were arrested for their part in the Spartacist uprising in Berlin and killed by soldiers. On February 21, 1919 Kurt Eisner, the man who had proclaimed the Bavarian republic, was assassinated by Count Arco-Valley, an anti-Semitic monarchist. The Center party deputy Mathias Erzberger, who had signed the armistice for Germany, was murdered in August 1921. The next victim was the foreign minister Walter Rathenau, an outstanding man who was killed by anti-Semitic young radicals in June 1922. It was a tragic loss for the Republic. The shock and shame caused by these crimes was all the greater as political murder until then had been remarkably rare in German history. Neither had anti-Semitism been a significant factor in political life.

The young Republic was also threatened by French-directed separatist movements in the Rhineland and the Palatinate. The last of these schemes collapsed in November 1923. Another grievous problem was the deterioration of German economy, with a steady, ever more rapid inflation.

In view of all these difficulties, the achievements of the Weimar National Assembly and of the first post-war governments were remarkable. Threatened by economic collapse, civil war, and the effects of an inclement peace treaty, the National Assembly yet succeeded in working out a new constitution which carried forward German constitutional developments of previous epochs to most modern forms. Extending democratic principles into the social and economic spheres, this Weimar Constitution which was promulgated on August 11, 1919, could rightly be called one of the most progressive in the world.

Germany remained a *Bundesstaat*, or federal state, and preserved the time honoured name of "German Reich". The Reichstag, resulting from general, direct, free, and secret elections received a strong position, with the Reich Chancellor as well as all cabinet members, the Reich ministers, being directly responsible to it. The Reichsrat represented the states or *Länder*, which participated in the federal administration and legislation. All of them had republican constitutions, which in their basic principles were identical with the constitution of the Reich. The Reich President was elected by the people for a term of office of seven years.

As national flag the Assembly adopted black-red-gold, symbol of the nineteenth century struggle for unity and democracy. These had also been the colours of the Holy Roman Empire. Since, however, the parties of the right were clinging to black-white-red, the colours of Hohenzollern Germany, the country was fatefully divided on this issue. On the extreme right, the National Socialists adopted the *Hakenkreuz*, or swasti-



ca, which they believed to be an "Aryan" symbol, while the extreme left gave its loyalty to the Soviet red flag with hammer and sickle.

From the Allied camp, little was done to assist the German Republic in its dire struggle for survival, although there were warning voices. Among these were Oswald Garrison Villard, the liberal American publicist; William C. Bullitt, then chief of the Western European Division in the State Department, later ambassador to the Soviet Union and to France; Harold Nicholson, the British diplomat and historian, a member of the British delegation; the British economist John Maynard Keynes (later Lord Keynes), and others. Predicting a triumph of right or left radicalism over the German Republic unless the Versailles policy of destruction and discrimination were abandoned in favour of effective support, they all felt that from such a triumph not only Germany but Europe as a whole would suffer.

The only success in foreign policy during those dismal years was the Treaty of Rapallo of April 16, 1922, negotiated between Walter Rathenau and the Soviet foreign commissar Georgij Chicherin, which liquidated the spirit of hostility together with the problems of reparations or debts, between the two countries. The Treaty of Brest Litowsk had already been declared null and void by the armistice of November 11, 1918, another formal peace treaty between Germany and the Soviet Union was never concluded.

A French-Belgian invasion of the Ruhr area was started on January 11, 1923, under petty pretexts — a minor default in German coal and timber deliveries. The intention was to separate the Rhineland and the Ruhr area from Germany, a plan which due to American objections had not succeeded at Versailles. The Reich government, headed by Chancellor Wilhelm Cuno, formerly president of the Hamburg-America Line, replied with a proclamation of "passive resistance", which was spontaneously supported by the people. All deliveries to the Allies stopped. Non-violence and non-cooperation, Mahatma Gandhi's principles, were used against brute force.

A territory with over eight million souls, the heart of German industrial production where most of the big steel mills, coal mines and centers of iron production are located, was directly or indirectly affected. All this came to a standstill. Military coercion was of no avail, for "one cannot mine coal with bayonets".

Faced with the impossible task of maintaining an economy without production and yet keeping the unemployed workers alive, the German government had recourse to the printing press. The value of the German



Mark went down steadily, first from day to day, then from hour to hour. Finally in November 1923 the American dollar was worth four trillion two hundred billion paper marks. That neither public nor family budgets were feasible under such conditions is obvious. Taxes were no longer worth collecting. The savings of generations melted away in a few months.

The shock caused by this process of mass expropriation remained in its after-effects, long after recovery was achieved. The middle classes, once the backbone of the state, found themselves worse off than proletarians, due to the national weakness of their country. From socialism they had little to fear anymore. On the contrary, they could gain from it. This contributed greatly to the success of National Socialism, which offered a combination of extreme nationalism with a moderate socialism.

It is significant that Hitler's first bid for power, the notorious "beer cellar putsch" in Munich on November 9, 1923, came in the wake of the Ruhr invasion and the inflation. It was put down by the Bavarian police. Also the communist and left wing socialist defections in Saxony and Thuringia mentioned before, coincided with the political and economic breakdown caused by the Ruhr invasion.

Thus it became clear that, if Germany as a nation and a free republic was to be saved, passive resistance must be broken off and negotiations must be sought with France. It was Dr. Gustav Stresemann, taking over at the height of the state crisis as Reich chancellor and foreign minister on August 13, 1923, who took on this most difficult task and by his courage and statesmanship carried it through to success. Passive resistance was abandoned on September 26. On November 15, the printing presses were stopped and a stable currency, called the *Rentenmark* was introduced — one Rentenmark for one trillion of the old paper marks.

A political change in Germany's favour had occurred meanwhile: the British crown jurists had declared the Franco-Belgian step unjustified and illegal in the first place. Their opinion was contained in a sharply worded note to the French government, dated August 11, 1923. Stresemann recognized his chance of entering into conversations also with Great Britain, and he understood that for the sake of Franco-German reconciliation America, too, had to be brought in.

Dr. Hjalmar Schacht, later president of the *Reichsbank*; the Social Democratic minister of finance Dr. Rudolf Hilferding; Dr. Hans Luther, Reich chancellor from 1925 to 1926 and later ambassador to Washington — these all contributed toward the stabilization of the currency. But without political stability economic recovery would not have been pos-



sible. It was a new confidence in Germany instilled by Stresemann at home and abroad that made another start possible, politically, economically, and in international affairs.

## XX

### SPRINGTIME OF EUROPE

Stresemann was born in Berlin in 1878, as the son of an innkeeper. Youngest among many brothers and sisters, he was the only one to receive a higher education. At an early date in life his brilliant style, intelligence, and artistic talents, especially in music, as well as his effectiveness as a public speaker attracted attention. He studied economics and political science at the universities of Berlin and Leipzig, and took his doctor's degree at the age of twenty two.

Stresemann was first elected to the Reichstag in 1907 as a member of the National Liberal party. In September 1917 he advanced to chairman of his party. In his earlier years not without nationalistic traits, he developed steadily towards a progressive liberalism and eventually became a pioneer for the idea of a supranational European community.

His cabinet was the first of those of the "great coalition" reaching from the Social Democrats on the left to his own *Deutsche Volkspartei* or German People's party, a right-of-the-center liberal group. This cabinet received a vote of confidence of 240 versus 76. The German Nationals (to the right of Stresemann's party), the *Deutsch-Völkischen* — a racist party, then occupying the extreme right since there were no National Socialists yet in the Reichstag — and, on the other side of the House, the Communists formed the opposition — a rather typical negative alliance of left and right wing forces.

Stresemann's chancellorship lasted only for a hundred days. It ended when on November 23, 1923 the Social Democrats withdrew from the coalition. Reich President Friedrich Ebert appointed Dr. Wilhelm Marx, chairman of the Center party, chancellor in his stead, while Stresemann remained in the cabinet as foreign minister.

The end of the inflation period was like awakening from a fever dream. By Christmas 1923 also food which had become scarce like in war times was again available in plenty, and there was no talk anymore of *putsches* or dictatorship. But, of course, many problems remained unsolved, among them how to meet reparation payments and



what to do in order to induce the French to evacuate the Ruhr and the Rhineland.

The United States Senate, by a vote of forty nine against thirty five, had rejected the Versailles Treaty on March 19, 1920. A separate peace treaty was concluded instead in August 1921, called the Peace of Berlin. Interestingly enough it abandoned the Versailles war guilt clause.

In 1922, the United States President Warren G. Harding appointed Herbert Hoover member of a commission authorized by Congress to deal with the problem of Allied war debts. Indirectly this affected also German reparations payments, as four fifths of these eventually found their way into the United States.

How unprofitable the Ruhr invasion proved also for France was shown by the fact that in the course of it the French Franc dropped by 25 percent. Stanley Baldwin, then British prime minister, appealed to America for help lest the whole world should collapse economically and financially. His appeal met with prompt response. In November 1923, under the chairmanship of General Charles G. Dawes, a commission was set up to deal with German reparations. His assistant was Owen D. Young of General Electrics, an outstanding American businessman. Herbert Hoover records in a memorandum dated November 5, 1923 that, when Secretary of State Charles E. Hughes pointed out French insistence that the commission must not in any way reduce the sum total of 132 billion Goldmarks (33 billion dollars) of German reparation payments in cash, Hoover suggested that the commission better ignore this French claim as unacceptable. Germany was confronted by political unrest and by another famine, and to insist on such a policy might some day bring disruption upon France herself.

The Dawes Commission worked fast and efficiently, presenting its report on April 9, 1924. Proceeding by the tenet "business, not politics", it put reparations payments on a more realistic basis — one billion gold marks per year, to increase to two and a half billions after five years. A final sum was not fixed. Obviously, even these reduced payments could not be met in a world closing its markets to exports whereby to earn such sums, but at least the policy of revenge had been abandoned. A foreign loan of 800 million gold marks (110 million dollars were raised in America, the rest in Europe) was granted to Germany to back up her currency.

The London Conference, which convened on July 16, 1924, accepted the Dawes plan. Also the German government was invited, Reich Chancellor Marx, Foreign Minister Stresemann and Finance Minister Hans



Luther headed the delegation. For the first time since the war Germany was not "in the dock" but treated as an equal at an international conference.

After heated political discussions the Reichstag, by a two thirds majority, ratified the Dawes plan. The evacuation of the Ruhr, which began during the summer, was completed by November 18, just one year after Germany's deepest fall.

American troops had left the German Rhineland already in 1923, the British followed in 1925/26. According to the Versailles provisions the French should have evacuated the Cologne zone on January 10, 1925, but they refused to do so. A German note of protest was of no avail. It was at about that time that Stresemann conceived the idea of a Rhineland mutual guaranty pact. On February 9, the German Government published these proposals in a note addressed to France.

During the difficult negotiations of those months Stresemann found a loyal and understanding friend in the British ambassador to Berlin, Edgar Lord d'Abernon. He helped to interpret Stresemann's ideas to the British government and succeeded in enlisting the support of the foreign secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain.

Great difficulties had also to be overcome at home. The German Nationals, even sections of Stresemann's own party objected to the plan because it voluntarily relinquished Alsace-Lorraine and recognized Germany's Western borders as imposed at Versailles.

On February 28, 1925, while the heated debates were in progress, Reich President Friedrich Ebert died. On April 26, the retired Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg was elected as his successor by the votes of the right and the conservatives, defeating the republican candidate Wilhelm Marx. The Communists presented a candidate of their own, Ernst Thaelmann, who polled 1.9 million votes. Had they gone to Wilhelm Marx, this would have been sufficient for Hindenburg's defeat.

Immediately after the end of the war, Hindenburg had loyally placed himself and the high command at the disposal of the republican authorities. Only this had made possible an orderly withdrawal of the German troops. According to the armistice conditions, this withdrawal from France, Belgium, Luxemburg, and Alsace-Lorraine to a line thirty miles east of the Rhine had to be completed — and it was — within fifteen days. Hindenburg's cooperation also had made possible an orderly demobilization of the millions of German soldiers, and it had enabled the young republic to deal effectively with its internal foes.

If Stresemann looked with some apprehension to this new Reich Pre-



sident, it was because he feared that Hindenburg might follow a rightist course and oppose his Locarno policy. But nothing of the kind did happen, Hindenburg for the next seven years proved as loyal to the constitutional government as his predecessor had been.

After the waves of war propaganda and an unfettered nationalism, which had carried the peoples of Europe to the edge of the abyss, the historic idea of occidental unity came to the fore once again. It was a rare and propitious constellation when the French foreign minister, Aristide Briand, the British foreign secretary, Sir Austen Chamberlain, and the German foreign minister, Gustav Stresemann all worked together toward a common goal.

The Treaty of Locarno, which derived its name from the Swiss town at the shore of Lago Maggiore, was signed October 16, 1925. During the final phase of the Conference Benito Mussolini, chief of the Italian government since 1922, was present.

The borders between France, Belgium and Germany were guaranteed as existing. Any resort to war, except in self-defence or by collective League of Nations action was prohibited, and a system of international arbitration was created. England and Italy acceded as guarantors to this pact which was to take effect as soon as Germany became a member of the League of Nations.

Arbitration agreements were also concluded between Germany and Poland, as well as Germany and Czechoslovakia. Here, too, war as a means of policy was renounced. However, in spite of French suggestions and diplomatic pressure, Stresemann wisely refused to conclude an "Eastern Locarno" that would have guaranteed the absurd German-Polish borders as imposed at Versailles. No democratic German government could have recognized them voluntarily, chances for peaceful adjustments by negotiation must remain open.

Locarno marked a turning point in European history. The "Spirit of Locarno", designating a new phase in Franco-German and international relations, became proverbial.

The Treaty of Berlin concluded between the German Reich and the Soviet Union on April 24 1926, was a pact of friendship and neutrality, developing the Rapallo Treaty. Concluded for five years, it was renewed for three more years in 1931. Stresemann has called the Berlin Treaty a supplement to Locarno. In this, Stresemann's policy was reminiscent of Bismark's careful balancing of East-West relations.



Also, the Berlin Treaty helped to alleviate Russia's ever present fear of isolation for the time being.

The Soviets, on their part, were then anxious to establish friendly relations with Germany because, with German recovery in full swing, there obviously was little chance for communist subversion.

On September 8, 1926 Germany became a member of the League of Nations. It was then that the spirit of the League, which up to that time had tended to be an instrument of power in the hands of the victors, particularly France, became more truly the expression of a supranational community. Upon his arrival in Geneva on September 10, Stresemann was greeted by the cheers of thousands in the streets, and greeted also by world public opinion as the statesman of new Europe.

"The Divine Architect of the world", Stresemann said in his inaugural address before the Assembly of the League, "has not created mankind as a homogeneous whole. He has made the nations of different races; He has given them their mother tongue as the sanctuary of their soul; He has given them countries with different characteristics as their homes. But it cannot be the purpose of the Divine world order that men should direct their supreme national energies against one another, thus ever thrusting back the general progress of civilization. He will serve humanity best who, firmly rooted in the faith of his own people, develops his moral and intellectual gifts to the utmost, thus overstepping his own national boundaries and serving the whole world".

There followed a few days later the famous conversations between Stresemann and Briand at Thoiry, a little French town not far from Geneva, where the two statesmen lunched together in private, discussing with complete frankness all pending French-German problems. Stresemann proposed, and Briand accepted in principle, the complete evacuation of the Rhineland, since, obviously, military occupation was incompatible with the spirit both of Locarno and of the League of Nations. Unfortunately, due to the opposition of Raymond Poincaré, then again French prime minister, nothing came of the Thoiry agreement which if carried out, might have altered the course of the coming decades.

The policy of Locarno, with its spirit of peace and international understanding brought back a certain measure of prosperity to Germany. Slum clearing projects, modern and comfortable homes for the broad masses of the people, and an advanced social legislation characterized those years. Every effort was made to raise the material and educational standard of the working classes. The sums spent by the state in 1929/30 for cultural activities were three times higher than in pre-war days.



German universities once again attracted foreign students in large number. The theatre and opera, concerts, ballets in Berlin, Bayreuth, Munich, Hamburg and many other cities were considered foremost in Europe, men like Richard Strauss, Bruno Walter, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Otto Klemperer are unforgotten, and so are, in the realm of science, Albert Einstein, Max Planck, Erwin Schrödinger, Otto Hahn; in medicine and psychology, Sigmund Freud, Ferdinand Sauerbruch, Gerhard Domagk; to mention only a few. In the world of letters the lyric poets Rainer Maria Rilke (d. 1926) and Stefan George (d. 1933) range among the great in German literature. Among Stefan George's disciples, there were many who distinguished themselves not merely in literature but as scholars, as did the medievalist Ernst Kantorowicz, and the historian and scholar of English and German literature Friedrich Gundolf of Heidelberg University. The works of Thomas Mann, Hermann Hesse, Franz Werfel, Alfred Neumann, Ricarda Huch all go back in significant part to the period of Weimar, and they have all lived on.

The Reichstag elections of March 20, 1928 when the rightist parties lost heavily reflected the political consolidation in Germany. A government was formed with the Social Democrat Hermann Müller as Chancellor, while Stresemann remained as foreign minister.

Taking up a suggestion advanced by the president of Columbia University in New York, Nicholas Murray Butler, the American secretary of state Frank B. Kellogg, in close contact with Aristide Briand, submitted a plan for the renunciation of war to the Locarno powers, in April 1928. This Kellogg-Briand pact, as it is called, was signed in Paris on August 27. Stresemann came to Paris for the occasion, the first German foreign minister to visit the French capital since 1870. He was greeted with shouts of "Vive Stresemann! Vive la paix!" During his stay he also met Poincaré for the first time and their conversation opened prospects for further reconciliation.

Meanwhile Stresemann's health steadily deteriorated under the strain of office. He had already suffered a slight stroke a few months before. On May 10, 1928, his fiftieth birthday, he had been unable to attend the reception given in his honour, and now, following the Paris visit he was too weak to participate in the annual session of the League of Nations in Geneva.

German prosperity was then based largely on loans from abroad. This indebtedness amounted to twenty five billion gold marks, of which twelve billions were short term credits. Germany's foreign holding did not exceed ten billions.



The first signs of a recession became visible in 1928. It proved increasingly difficult for Germany to meet the heavy annuities under the Dawes plan, unemployment figures began to rise, and with it political radicalism of the left and right.

In December 1928, at Lugano, personal contact between Stresemann, Briand and Chamberlain was renewed. Their joint communiqué expressed a desire to liquidate definitively all problems resulting from the war. The practical result was the appointment of a committee under the chairmanship of Owen D. Young, to reexamine the reparations problem.

The Young plan was adopted at the Hague Conference from August 6 to 31, 1929. It still contained heavy burdens, but its annuities of 1707 million marks were lower than the ones agreed on under the Dawes Plan. Most important: June 30, 1930 was set as an ultimate date for the evacuation of all foreign troops from the Rhineland.

Psychologically of course, it was a depressing mortgage under the Young plan that financial obligations were extended over the next thirty-six years — over an entire generation, indeed into the time of a generation yet unborn. Bedlam broke loose over the plan in Germany. The extreme right saw a chance that by whipping up indignation it might make up for its defeat in the last Reichstag election. There were now twelve National Socialists in parliament — not a large group but a very active one. National Socialism has often been called a child of the Versailles Treaty. But while inheriting all the vices of this "father", the movement grew up to strength by clamorous protests and moral indignation against him. At the same time the National Socialists opposed and frustrated all republican attempts at a revision; they wanted to preserve Versailles until they themselves would be strong enough to kill it. National Socialist demagoguery forced also the German Nationals to move more and more into the extremist camp.

This right wing chorus was joined vociferously by the Communists, who saw their chance for a comeback.

Stresemann had the last great day of his life on September 9, 1929 on the rostrum of the League of Nations in Geneva. Taking up a preceding address by Briand, he made his momentous appeal for a United States of Europe. Among his specific suggestions were a European currency and European postal stamps. To the youth of Europe he recommended to rally to the standards of cosmopolitan traditions. "Down with the guns, down with the machine guns", Briand had said; never again should French or German mothers have to worry about the lives of their sons. This address, Stresemann exclaimed, should be



included in the school books the world over. Modern technology and economy were rendering frontiers in Europe grotesquely antiquated obstacles between the peoples, impeding their prosperity and happiness.

After a short vacation together with his family, in Switzerland, Stresemann returned to Berlin. There in his fifty first year he passed away in the morning hours of October 3, 1929.

"The world honoured the dead", one of his biographers, Rudolf Olden, wrote about him, "as it had honoured no other German of the new epoch. A great statesman, a great European, a great patriot, they said, was dead . . . It may be as you will, but in those years, at a turning point of history, he was Germany".

In view of the breakdown of European unity so shortly after Stresemann's death, it might have seemed for a time as though the ideals of that period had been but a dream based upon wishful thinking. When on May 10, 1963 Stresemann's eighty-fifth birthday was commemorated in France, in Germany, and in many other countries he was praised as one of the great pioneers of the new Europe. Without him as well as Briand and Chamberlain neither Franco-German friendship, nor the European community as we know it today might ever have come to fruition. It was also stressed on that day that the second world war might never have come if these three statesmen had received stronger support from their own nations.

## XXI

### THE FINAL YEARS OF THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

On October 29, 1929, the "Black Tuesday", the New York stock exchange collapsed. Over sixteen million shares were dumped during that single day, with an average loss of forty points for the prime stocks of the leading corporations. This was the beginning of a crisis, the worst in American history, which affected all branches of the economy, industry, the banks, corporations, the farming population, and which lasted in full vigour until 1933.

The American depression swept on like a tidal wave around the globe. The revocation of American loans forced Great Britain to similar measures, bank credits were frozen or recalled. Exceedingly high tariffs introduced in the United States by the Smoot Hawley Tariff Act of



June 17, 1930 as a protective measure cut down imports from Europe, without really benefiting American economy.

Under the impact of this world crisis German economic and political life was shaken to its foundations. Communism and National Socialism increased in strenght by leaps and bounds.

Yet, a plebiscite against the Young Plan on December 22, 1929, organized by the National Socialists and the German Nationals failed to obtain a majority — a posthumous approval of Stresemann's policies.

But now there was no statesman of rank left in Germany who could have used such a victory. Julius Curtius, Stresemann's successor as foreign minister, did not command any comparable authority at home or abroad. The last Social Democratic Reich chancellor, Hermann Müller, a man with little imagination or initiative, manoeuvred himself out of office over a minor point of disagreement in some unemployment insurance bill. His successor, appointed on March 30, 1930, was Dr. Heinrich Brüning, chairman of the Center party in the Reichstag. One knows from one or two entries in Stresemann's diary that Brüning was not his friend but was rather leaning towards the German Nationals.

From the start Brüning seemed set on making extensive use of the emergency powers entrusted to the Reich President by the much discussed article 48 of the Weimar Constitution. These powers had been primarily intended to cope with emergencies of a political nature. But, during the grim period of inflation from 1920 to 1923 when economic collapse threatened to engulf the country in political anarchy, they had also been invoked to handle economic and financial problems.

Now, under Brüning, article 48 was used for the first time to put into force the national budget, overriding parliament which had rejected it. When the Reichstag demanded that the decree be rescinded, Brüning had the President dissolve it on July 16, 1930. The Brüning government ignored the fact that the existing Reichstag still had potentially a perfectly workable majority. The parties of the "great coalition" controlled 283 seats, a hundred more than the entire opposition of Communists, German Nationals, National Socialists and some splinter groups.

This rash dissolution of parliament came at a time when the economic crisis abroad and in Germany itself was approaching new heights. The number of unemployed increased at an alarming pace. Already in May 1930 it was at 2 690 000, by December 4 357 000 were on the dole.

The campaign for the election of a new Reichstag was marked by



unprecedented excesses of left and right radical agitation, by open violence, and bloodshed.

The outcome of the elections held on September 14 was a near catastrophe for the Republic. The National Socialists were bloated from 12 deputies to 107, which made them the second strongest party. The Communists increased from 54 to 77 seats. Wholesale violence on the part of the National Socialists occurred when the Reichstag convened in Berlin in October.

It may soberly be argued that, had not the National Socialists received the tremendous encouragement afforded them by that election victory of 1930, they would no longer have been a threat by 1932, the year in which the legislative period of the Reichstag elected in 1928 would have ended normally.

Despite much bloody fighting on the streets, the Communist and National Socialist parties worked closely together from September 1930 on, toward the common goal of destroying the Weimar Republic. Either party hoped, of course, that after the goal was achieved it would be able to take over absolute power all by itself.

As Dimitri Manuilsky, referee for German affairs in the Communist International, put it at an executive committee meeting in Moscow, on December 15, 1931: "Our principal enemy is not Hitler. The main enemy is rather the system Severing, Brüning, Hindenburg... With his (Hitler's) help we shall first smash the Social Democratic party, then the Brüning administration... In the present stage of development of the German revolution Hitler is indisputably our ally."

The line of action to be taken by the German Communist party was thereby laid down like a dogma. It is worth recalling that after the second world war Manuilsky was the chief Soviet delegate to the United Nations in San Francisco at their opening conference on April 25, 1945.

Ideologically the Communists would "justify" their alliance with National Socialism as follows. There was, so they allege, a difference only in degree, not in essence between the "bourgeois" state of Weimar and the state envisaged by the National Socialists. Both were "capitalistic" and therefore the National Socialist dictatorship was to be preferred to the Weimar form of democracy, because Hitler would surely destroy the trade unions and all free workers' associations and thereby prepare the ground for Communist power.

From then on, in the Reichstag as well as in the state diets, National Socialists and Communists would join hands to vote down government-sponsored measures or the governments themselves. Their common pur-



pose was to wreck the parliamentary process and discredit it in the eyes of the public. But they also worked together in extra-parliamentary manoeuvres, like wild cat strikes against the trade unions, or wherever there was a chance to sabotage democratic processes.

As agreed upon at the Hague Conference on June 30, 1930 the Rhineland was evacuated by the French after almost twelve years of occupation.

By spring 1931, German unemployment passed the five million mark. The economic situation went from bad to worse, not merely in Germany. An explosive outbreak occurred in Austria, isolated economically because her union with Germany had been prohibited by the Allies. Since 1927 Austria had more and more urgently suggested an economic and customs union, because for her industrial and agricultural production she was in need of outlets such as could be found only in Germany. When the Austrian federal chancellor Johannes Schober visited Berlin in February 1930, agreement on a comprehensive trade pact was reached. In March 1931, negotiations between Schober and the German foreign minister Dr. Julius Curtius were resumed in Vienna. On March 19, the Austrian and the German governments in a joint communiqué announced that they intended to abolish tariff barriers between their two countries, as a first step towards a general reform of European economy on the basis of regional agreements.

This customs union at once provoked a storm of protests in France, Czechoslovakia, Italy, and England. In order to put pressure on Austria and Germany, the Banque de France and other French banks called in short term notes they held from banks of the two countries. The total amount was estimated by American experts at 300 million dollars, or one billion three hundred million marks. This proved to be the final blow against the already tottering economic edifice in Central Europe. On May 11, 1931 Austria's leading bank, the *Kreditanstalt*, collapsed spreading panic throughout the world of international finance. On May 15, a run on the banks started in Budapest, and all over Europe capital began its flight to Switzerland or across the ocean.

Most affected by the *Kreditanstalt* crash was the German banking system. On May 7, the United States ambassador Frederick M. Sackett informed President Herbert Hoover in a confidential memorandum handed to him by Chancellor Brüning to the effect that the flight of capital, the drying up of foreign credits, currency problems, mounting unemployment were creating an extremely precarious situation. Foreign creditors were refusing to grant moratoria on their loans to German



banks. The chancellor pointed out the dangers arising from Communists and National Socialists who had but one aim — to destroy the democratic structure of Germany. Their ranks were swelled by many from moderate circles who now, under the impact of the desperate crisis, flocked to the extremists.

Austria, Herbert Hoover states in his memoirs, had been maimed and left to deteriorate into the poor — house of Europe, her only hope lay in an economic union with Germany. This hope, too, was frustrated when in September 1931 the World Court, in an eight-to-seven decision (political rather than legal in nature) declared a customs union with Germany incompatible with certain engagements Austria had undertaken when granted a League of Nations loan in October 1922. Germany and Austria, bowing to the decision, abandoned the project and Curtius resigned. National Socialism, always strong in Austria, gained considerably as economic motives combined with a feeling of hurt national pride.

In Washington, more clearly than in the capitals of Western Europe, it was recognized that the democratic forces in Austria, Germany, and eastern Europe must be supported against their political enemies for, as President Hoover put it, "these democratic governments are the foundation of any hope for a lasting peace in Europe".

On June 18, an urgent personal message from President von Hindenburg reached Hoover — Germany's own resources for coping with the world wide economic crisis, which had hit her economy particularly hard, were exhausted. Assistance was urgently required. In the short span of a few days the Reichsbank had lost a full third of its reserves in gold and foreign currency by transfers abroad. In almost prophetic words Hindenburg warned of the coming menace to German and international life from suffering and despair. He adjured President Hoover as the "representative of the great American people" to take appropriate measures so that a turn of developments might be brought about at once.

In immediate response Herbert Hoover, on June 20, declared a moratorium of one year for all intergovernmental debts. Within a week, fifteen of the governments concerned accepted the proposal unconditionally, with the exception of the French, who went on calling in their foreign loans. Irreparable damage had been done when France finally yielded. On July 13, one of Germany's three largest banks, the *Darmstädter und National Bank*, closed its doors. A wave of bankruptcies swept Germany and Austria in the wake of this catastrophe, and within two days practically all banks in Central Europe had been



closed. On September 21, even the Bank of England was forced off the gold standard, which again affected many other countries and currencies and contributed to aggravating the general crisis.

By the end of 1931, German unemployment reached six millions, rising still higher during the winter months.

The Hoover Moratorium offered a respite. When the Lausanne Conference from July 16 to 19, 1932, fixed the final sum of German reparations indebtedness at three billion Marks, the moratorium in practice had already brought this matter to a close. An exact accounting put forth by the German government on January 29, 1932 revealed that up to that date Germany had been made to pay in cash, goods and services, the sum of 68 billion Goldmarks. The price which the world paid for this in return was the disruption of the democratic order and of international peace.

On April 10, 1932 Hindenburg was reelected to the presidency, with the votes of his opponents of 1925. "Beat Hitler by voting for Hindenburg!" was the common slogan of Social Democrats, the Center, the Democratic party, and all other groups loyal to democracy. Hindenburg received 19,4 million votes, Hitler, though defeated, the alarmingly high figure of 13,4, the Communist candidate Ernst Thaelmann 3,7 millions.

The Brüning government on April 15 banned the National Socialist private armies, SA and SS, later of world-wide ill fame. But although Brüning commanded by Social Democratic toleration, a parliamentary majority, Hindenburg dismissed him on May 30.

Brüning's successor as Reich chancellor was the right wing Center politician Franz von Papen. Since in Parliament he could count on barely ten percent of the deputies to support him, Papen dissolved the Reichstag on June 4, with new elections to be held on July 31. In order to court favour with the National Socialists Papen on June 16 lifted the ban on their organisations.

The dismal summer of 1932 was marked by National Socialist violence on a large scale. When SA and SS came out into the open again there were ninety nine political assassinations within the month, with eleven hundred casualties in addition. Of course, Communist terror organisations like the (illegal) Red Front estimated at 150 000 members, Communist youth organisations trained for civil war, and others also had their share. Clashes occurred almost every day.

6 750 000 were now officially registered as totally unemployed, 34



percent of the non-agrarian population. (The corresponding figure in Great Britain was 16.8 percent.) Actual unemployment was even much higher.

One of the most important bulwarks of German democracy, the state government of Prussia, was dismantled by Chancellor von Papen on July 20, 1932. In flagrant abuse of the emergency powers of Article 48 of the Weimar constitution, Papen ousted the legitimate Social Democratic-Centrist-Democratic coalition government headed by Minister President Otto Braun and the Minister of the Interior Karl Severing (both Social Democrats) and set himself up as "Reich commissar" for Prussia. With the help of the armed forces, of which Hindenburg was the commander-in-chief, martial law was imposed on Berlin and the surrounding province of Brandenburg.

The state of Prussia (embracing two thirds of Germany), especially its well trained police force of one hundred thousand men, was now under Papen's orders. This coup d'état — an act of high treason — by striking at the federal system of Germany removed the checks and balances normally working against an abuse of central authority.

The Prussian government, of course, ought not to have yielded without a fight. It should have mobilized its police forces and called upon the many millions loyal to democracy to rally to its support. But the deposed ministers, nobly if unrealistically putting their faith in democratic institutions rather than determined political action, left it entirely to the coming Reichstag elections and to an expected favourable verdict of the Supreme Court to oust Papen and to reinstate them into office.

Sure enough, in October 1932 the Supreme Court in large part sustained the position taken by the deposed ministers, but by that time Papen was so firmly entrenched that the ruling had mere paper value. As to the Reichstag elections they indeed gave to Papen only 42 mandates out of 608. But the National Socialists emerged as the strongest party with 230 seats, the Communists went up to 89. The Social Democrats made a good showing with 133, the Center with 97. The splinter parties practically disappeared.

Since no majority could be found for a government, the Reichstag was again dissolved on September 12.

A new ray of hope appeared for the Republic when in the Reichstag elections of November 6, the National Socialists lost 2.3 million votes and 35 seats.

National Socialism clearly combined many of the features of a doctrine of salvation appealing to uprooted and despairing masses. There



was strong national resentment, there were elements of social revolution borrowed from Marxism, there was a substitute religion in the myth of "blood and race". A violent anti-Semitism permitted the little man in the party to consider himself as a superior being merely because he belonged to the undefined and undefinable "Aryan" race — a convenient strategem, quite inexpensive to the leaders, to keep the masses content.

Millions had of course endorsed the National Socialist ticket not for any particular ideological reason, much less because they hated the Jews or wanted to conquer foreign countries, but simply because Hitler and his chief propagandist Joseph Goebbels had promised them work. After years of unemployment this was all they cared about.

Many others, specially among the young, were idealists who sincerely believed Hitler would bring about a "people's community" based on comradeship and equality, a sort of classless society just as the Marxists were promising it. They also believed that the injustices inflicted upon Germany by the Versailles Treaty could be rightened only by a "strong" government. Had not Italy and Turkey become factors in international life again when Mussolini and Kemal Atatürk rose to power? Why couldn't something similar happen in Germany equally without disrupting international peace?

The elections of November 6 indicated that this idealist type among the young voters had begun to recognize the fraudulence of Hitler's promises. Also, there were signs of some approaching economic improvements, which immediately made National Socialism lose part of its attractiveness to the unemployed.

On November 17 the unpopular Chancellor von Papen resigned, on December 2 General Kurt von Schleicher was appointed as his successor. Here was a "political" general who for some time had had his hands in many a behind-the-scenes intrigue, making and unmaking chancellors or cabinet ministers. Generals are rarely good statesmen, and Schleicher was no exception to this rule. But he had some sound ideas, as for instance in wishing to establish an alliance between the armed forces (the *Reichswehr*) and the trade unions; to outlaw and disband private armies like the SA and SS; to carry out a program of social legislation and resume Brüning's program of agrarian reform. While Papen, the man of the *coup d'état* against Prussia, had been completely unacceptable to Social Democrats and trade unions they were prepared to negotiate with Schleicher who, it was also realized, offered a last defence against National Socialism. Hitler's waning prestige had received another shot in the arm when, with Communist help, he demon-



strated his power by a strike in the Berlin transport system that practically paralysed the capital in November 1932. This scheme was carried out jointly by Communists and National Socialists.

Schleicher planned to dissolve the Reichstag once again. He expected the new elections to result in another drastic reduction in National Socialist strength, also because their finances were beginning to run low.

On January 4, 1933 Hitler and Papen, enemies so far, met in Cologne to conclude an alliance, with the purpose of ousting Schleicher and taking over in his stead. Papen, who had Hindenburg's ear, made Hitler palatable to the president who at a meeting a few months before had disliked and distrusted Hitler intensely. But Papen argued that there would be more conservatives than National Socialists in the cabinet, and that Germany would finally have a "stable government" again. He, Papen, if appointed vice chancellor, could see to it that the National Socialists mended their uncouth manners displayed in the fight for power.

When Reich Chancellor von Schleicher on January 28 sought the presidential sanction for dissolving the Reichstag, Hindenburg refused and curtly informed him of his dismissal. A few months later, on June 30, 1934, as should be recorded at this point, Schleicher and his wife were murdered by National Socialist gunmen, upon Hitler's orders.

On January 30, 1933 President von Hindenburg, who had been reelected with the express mandate to keep National Socialism out of power, appointed Hitler chancellor. Herr von Papen was made vice chancellor. It was on that day that the history of the German Republic came to end, to give way to an ever more ruthless dictatorial regime which was to spell disaster first for Germany, then also for so many other nations.



## XXII

## NOT BY THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE

The full extent of the tragedy of January 30, 1933 is shown by the fact that the acute economic and political crisis had already abated when Hindenburg delivered the Republic to the lawless National Socialist regime. Unemployment did no longer increase, the reparations problem was settled, occupation troops had been withdrawn from the Rhineland.

The fruit of what Stresemann had sown was now reaped by Hitler, but he quickly wasted it all. His methods of brute force and unscrupulous deceit destroyed again what had been initiated before him by good will. Nothing of what Hitler ever achieved by power or conquest has survived his downfall.

The achievements and merits of the German Republic, on the other hand, far from perishing for ever on January 30, 1933 came to life again after 1945. They were a moral and political capital which helped the new Germany in rebuilding democracy and reentering the family of free nations.

In the first Hitler cabinet there were only four outright Nazis: Adolf Hitler; Hermann Göring as minister without portfolio, later minister for aviation and minister president of Prussia; Wilhelm Frick, in charge of the important ministry of the interior; and Joseph Goebbels, as minister for "propaganda and public enlightenment". All other posts were held by conservatives or non-party men.

When Hitler and his entire cabinet took the oath of office, they swore loyalty to the Constitution of Weimar. But this did not prevent them from violating it at will. As an immediate measure, the broadcasting system (until then non-partisan and non-political) as well as the press were placed under ever more rigid controls, and eventually transformed into mere tools of Nazi propaganda.

The conservatives and non-Nazi nationalists who expected to "domesticate" the National Socialist minority in the cabinet had overlooked that Hitler had at his disposal instruments of power which they themselves lacked — the brown-shirted SA, and the black-shirted SS. With their leader in control of the government, they now obtained all the funds, all the equipment, all the arms they required from public sources. Like a veritable army of occupation they imposed themselves upon the German people.



On February 27 the Reichstag building in Berlin went up in flames. The fire, started by Nazi activists, was at once used as a pretext for a fancied "national emergency" — a "Communist plot", so the National Socialists declared, was behind the Reichstag fire, which was to be the fana for a nation-wide uprising. The Hitler government prevailed upon Hindenburg to issue a decree based upon the Article 48, "For the Protection of the People and the State", on February 28, 1933. The dictatorial powers of this decree were used not only to suppress the Communist organisations, but also those of the Social Democrats and finally all opposition to the regime. For years to come the decree remained a pillar of Hitler's power, used again and again to claim for the most blatantly unconstitutional acts a sham legality.

The Reichstag had been dissolved on February 1, new elections were held March 5. They are usually referred to as the last free elections in Germany, but "free" is here a relative term. Not only the Communist party, but also the Social Democrats were silenced, their meetings were banned or dissolved as soon as they had been opened, their newspapers were suppressed, and they were not permitted to put up election posters. Press and publications of the Center party and the Liberals were also under strict control, many of their meetings were broken up by brown- and black-shirted storm troopers.

And yet, the Social Democrats lost only one single seat. The Communists returned with eighty-one deputies, losing one fifth of their former strength to the National Socialists. The Center even gained, the German Nationals remained stable. Other non-Nazi parties elected 23 members. The National Socialists obtained forty three percent of the Reichstag seats or 288 members. Together with their conservative and nationalist allies they reached not quite 52 percent — enough to form a coalition government, but far short of the two thirds majority required for changing the constitution.

The elections of March 5, 1933 have historic significance. As long as the German people were free, or even comparatively free, and as long as elections had any meaning, they never gave to Hitler a majority consent. The manufactured "majorities" of later years, up to 99.9 percent, have no more meaning than have today those in all Soviet controlled countries.

On March 22, 1933 it was officially announced that at Dachau, near Munich, a concentration camp had been opened, with a capacity for five thousand prisoners. Others followed soon after, among them Ora-



nienburg and Sachsenhausen, names of infamy and horror known today all over the world.

For Germany, which had always been proud of her tradition as a *Rechtsstaat*, a state of justice where no one could be deprived of his rights and freedom without due process of law, these concentration camps were evidence of national shame and degradation. At the same time, they were also symbols of honour: here was proof that the new regime must fall back on terror, because it could not rely on the voluntary consent of the German people.

For many years, before a single foreigner was interned in these camps, the prisoners were exclusively Germans, belonging to all walks of life, all creeds and religions, all political parties and convictions, united by their opposition to the Nazi regime.

On March 24, 1933 the rump Reichstag — the Communists had been prevented en bloc to take their seats, many Social Democrats were in jail — adopted the so-called Enabling Act. This conferred even wider dictatorial powers on the Hitler government, including the legislative prerogatives of the Reichstag and authority to depart from the Constitution. However, the institutions of the Reichstag, the Reichsrat, and the Presidency were not to be altered by these emergency powers. The act was to go out of force as soon as the cabinet should be changed, and it was to expire automatically on April 1, 1937. But even these restrictions were soon ignored or brushed aside.

All Social Democratic deputies still able to attend the Reichstag — ninety four — voted against the Enabling Act, without exception.

On July 14, 1933 all political parties except Hitler's own were dissolved, any attempt to continue or revive them or to create new ones was forbidden under severe penalties. Hitler's conservative-nationalist allies who had proposed to "domesticate" him, were not exempted from these measures. In October, also the rump Reichstag was dissolved. Its successor, "elected" on a single-party slate on November 12, 1933, did no longer deserve the name of Reichstag. It was an irrelevant body of party appointees, convening from time to time for the sole purpose of giving the Hitler salute, listening to Hitler's oratory, singing Hitler hymns, and departing again.

The first anti-Jewish boycott was organized by the brown- and black-shirts, who roamed the streets to intimidate the civilian population, on April 1, 1933. Until then, German citizens of the Jewish faith had enjoyed the same constitutional rights as all others. Twelve thousand German officers and soldiers of the Mosaic faith had been killed during



the first world war — a high percentage indeed out of a total of about 600 000 German Jews. Some of the Jewish communities, especially in the Rhineland, may have existed there ever since Roman days, over two thousand years ago.

Modern German culture, music, literature, science, the liberal arts, and all other domains are so much intertwined with great Jewish contributions that any attempt at a clear cut distinction, even if one should wish to make it, between "Jewish" and "non-Jewish" achievements would be entirely illusory. The crimes committed against the Jewish people increasing in horror as the Nazi regime progressed towards its ultimate downfall, were a crime also against the German people and their history.

Ever since the days of the Great Elector and of Frederick the Great, the German civil service was known for its impartial efficiency and high ethics. All this was changed by a National Socialist "law" of April 7, 1933, which gave arbitrary power to the government to dismiss so-called "non-Aryans" as well as any civil servants considered "politically unreliable" from the Nazi point of view. In the same month, the Secret State Police, or Gestapo, was set up which soon established itself as the real and indisputable power in the land. During the second world war it combined with the SS to become the scourge of the occupied countries.

To dispose "legally" of a certain Marinus van der Lubbe, probably a tool of the Nazi arsonists, a "law" was promulgated on March 29, 1933 which retroactively introduced the death penalty for his part in the Reichstag fire. After the war, the National Socialist leaders were condemned in Nuremberg, some of them to death, also on the basis of *ex post facto* laws made up after the offenses had been committed.

Since the *Reichsgericht*, Germany's Supreme Court, and other German courts had maintained a certain judiciary independence, a *Volksgerichtshof* or "People's Court" was established on April 24, 1934, to which the trial of all major political offenses was assigned. Here the defendants could not even choose their own counsel without approval by the president of the court, who could withdraw it at any time. No recourse or appeal were admitted against the verdicts of this court — a blood tribunal rather than a court of justice.

The state diets were abolished on January 30, 1934. All power was shifted from the *Länder* to the central dictatorship. Through its *Gau-leiter*, or regional leaders, the Nazi party asserted its control even into the most remote rural communities.

A great many political refugees had made their escape from Nazi Ger-



many already in 1933. They carried information to the outside world about the two Germanies — one, represented by an all-powerful dictatorial regime, the other, representing the majority of the people, driven underground, into the concentration camps, or into the so-called inner emigration.

It is an historic fact that the German resistance movement, as proved by the violent repressive measures of the regime, began to operate as soon as Hitler came to power. Nor was it ever possible to suppress or destroy it completely. The British daily *Manchester Guardian* estimated in 1936 that the number of blood witnesses had already then surpassed ten thousand. Socialists, liberals, conservatives were among them, men and women of all social walks of life and of all denominations. Over one million Germans were at one time or another in Nazi concentration camps. The files of the Gestapo seems to have contained the names of two million suspects.

Many of the German refugees, artists, scholars, educators among them, made significant contributions to the life of their adopted countries. They also formed political organisations, groups and parties in exile which maintained the closest possible contact with their friends inside Germany. It was largely due to their efforts that also abroad hope was kept alive for an eventual restoration of German democracy.

On June 30, 1934 the world was given a glimpse of the working of the Nazi dictatorship. This was at the occasion of the notorious "blood purge", ordered by Hitler and carried out by Gestapo and SS. Primary victims were the commander of the brown-shirted SA, Ernst Röhm, and his friends, but in the cours of this whole-sale murder, which came as a shock to civilized mankind, many opponents of the regime were assassinated, among them the former Chancellor von Schleicher and his wife, prominent Catholic leaders, and others.

When Reich President von Hindenburg died on August 2, 1934, Hitler proclaimed himself "Führer and Reich Chancellor". This arrogation, a gross violation not only of the Constitution but even of Hitler's own Enabling Act, was "confirmed" by a spurious referendum.

In its relations to foreign powers the Hitler regime was able to live for a while on the moral credit accumulated by the Weimar Republic. The plebiscite in the Saar District on January 13, 1935, effecting the return of that area to Germany (from which it had been separated by the Versailles Treaty) was not a vote for Hitler, but for Germany.

On October 14, 1933, the Hitler regime had withdrawn from the League of Nations. Yet, on January 26, 1934 Hitler was able to obtain



a friendship and non-aggression pact from Poland for ten years, and this greatly enhanced the prestige of his regime. Also the Naval Agreement concluded with Great Britain on June 18, 1935, was an important step towards consolidating Nazi power at home and abroad — all the more so as shortly before, on March 16, Hitler had reintroduced general conscription. British, French, Italian protests remained on paper. Neither did the unilateral denunciation of Locarno, or the military occupation of the Rhineland on March 7, 1936 draw more than feeble protests.

When Nazi conspirators murdered Austria's chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss on July 25, 1934, and tried to seize power, the little country was saved by Mussolini's firm stand. But the attitude of the Italian dictator changed at the time of his conquest of Ethiopia in 1935/36, when Hitler supported him against the League of Nations sanctions. On October 27, 1936 the Rome-Berlin-Axis was formed. By the accession of Japan, on November 25, it was widened to the Anti-Comintern Pact. Now National Socialism could for a while pose as the champion of European civilization against the Soviet threat.

When in March 1938 the National Socialists occupied Austria, Hitler cashed in on the injustices and national grievances created by the treaties of Versailles and St. Germain in 1919. To be sure, annexation by force in 1938 was not the same as the voluntary *Anschluss* everyone had desired. But many people in Austria, who cheered Hitler by the millions, did not realize this at once.

Czechoslovakia was next. The Munich Agreement, to this day a synonym for appeasement, marked the climax of that disastrous policy of the British prime minister Neville Chamberlain and the French minister president Edouard Daladier. At the Munich Conference of September 29, 1938, Hitler, his foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, Chamberlain, Daladier, Benito Mussolini and the Italian foreign minister Count Galeazzo Ciano were present, but no representative of Czechoslovakia. The German speaking Sudeten territory — some 10 000 square miles with 3 million souls — was transferred to Germany. Poland and Hungary both took advantage of the Czechoslovak predicament to secure their part of the spoils.

"Munich" demoralized the democratic world while putting the Nazi regime more firmly into the saddle. It was one of the principal factors which brought about the second world war, less than a year after.

It is general knowledge today what in September 1938 was known only to some governments that Hitler could not have dared to go to



war. The German armed forces under Colonel General Ludwig Beck and his successor Colonel General Franz Halder, in close contact with men like Carl Friedrich Goerdeler and other prominent leaders of the German underground resistance movement, would have overthrown the Nazi regime rather than obeyed an order by Hitler to invade Czechoslovakia. After Munich the resistance movement felt abandoned by the Western powers, while Hitler could point triumphantly to the success of his policy.

That "peace in our time", as Chamberlain asserted upon his return to England, was by no means assured, became obvious already six weeks later by the anti-Jewish excesses organized on November 9, 1938. Homes, shops, synagogues — some of them historic monuments centuries old — were burned down, Jewish victims were beaten up and imprisoned. Finally, all remaining Jewish property was confiscated. Never before had such pogroms been witnessed in any European country outside of Russia.

On March 15, 1939 the National Socialists, not content with their Munich successes, invaded the Czechoslovak rump state. Under the name of Bohemia and Moravia it was made a "protectorate". Now it was manifest that Hitler did not — as he had pretended till the time of Munich — aim only at the incorporation of all Germans but that he planned to subjugate Europe.

On March 23, the city and territory of Memel were ceded by Lithuania and occupied by German troops.

The Polish problem began to emerge as soon as Czechoslovakia had been annexed by Hitler. On March 17, 1939, in his historic "Birmingham speech", Neville Chamberlain finally announced the end of appeasement policy. An Anglo-French guaranty for the integrity of Poland was made known by the British Government in the House of Commons on March 31, and on April 6 this guaranty was widened into a mutual pact of assistance, including, of course, by military means.

The Soviet Union had felt slighted and isolated by the Munich agreement. But when England and France, in the spring and summer 1939, strenuously negotiated in Moscow for a "stop Hitler" alliance, the world was stunned by the announcement that foreign ministers Joachim von Ribbentrop and Vyacheslav M. Molotov, in the name of their respective governments, had signed a treaty of neutrality and mutual assistance on August 23, 1939. In a secret protocol (the existence of which was immediately suspected) they agreed on partitioning the Baltic States and Poland. For the Soviets, this pact was a logical continuation of their



policy which, looking upon Hitler as an "indisputable ally", helped to bring him to power. Both Hitler and Stalin hoped that their pact, which reversed all previously announced aims and intentions, would paralyze Poland and the Western powers while they themselves walked away with the spoils. From Moscow's viewpoint another motive may have been that, by relieving Hitler of the fear of a "second front", he would be lured into aggression against the Western powers, leading to a war in which there would be losers only, with the exception of the Soviet Union.

The Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, as it is called, made a peaceful solution of the German-Polish conflict indeed impossible. What Hitler's controlled press then hailed as the act of a genius greater than Bismarck's did in reality lead to the war, the collapse of the regime and, in the end, to the partitioning of Germany.

## XXIII

### THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The frictions between Germany and Poland go back in their origins to the Treaty of Versailles. The border lines as drawn in 1919 violated the Pre-Armistice Agreement, they were both unjust and unwise. Stresemann persistently refused to sign an "Eastern Locarno", for nothing good could come of recognizing voluntarily as just what obviously was not.

As time went by, it was more and more acknowledged in London and Washington that the German position in this matter was sound and, until Hitler came to power, there was hope for a revision of these borders by negotiations or international arbitration. Poland's access to the sea could have been safeguarded by a multilane highway to the freeport of Gdingen, or north of East Prussia in the vicinity of Memel.

Neither were the German claims to the Free State of Danzig unfounded, a city of 450 000 souls which had been separated from Germany without a plebiscite. 97 percent of the population were German, two percent Polish, one percent of other nationalities. To bring about the return of Danzig by peaceful means had been one of the avowed aims of Stresemann's policy.

But the most legitimate claims are vitiated if pursued by illegitimate



means. War as an instrument of international policy had been outlawed by the Kellogg Pact of 1927, and in 1934 the Hitler government itself had voluntarily guaranteed the German-Polish borders for a period of ten years.

After the Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement became known, the British parliament met in special session. The government was voted such powers as are usually not conceded in England except in times of war. On August 25, the British-Polish pact of April 6 was widened into a comprehensive agreement for mutual military defence. Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain informed Hitler that England would live up to her treaty obligations, if Poland were attacked.

But, obviously, the Hitler government relied on its new alliance with the Soviet Union and believed that the Western Powers, if things came to a head, would revert to their appeasement policy. The fact that England and France had guaranteed Poland's borders already at the time of Locarno was completely ignored.

On September 1, 1939 Hitler ordered the military attack on Poland. In accordance with their treaty obligations England and France declared war on Germany on September 3.

The campaign in Poland, which lasted only eighteen days, failed to arouse any national enthusiasm in Germany. There were dark premonitions of coming disaster. As a matter of fact, inspite of the complete military victory, the campaign ended in political defeat when on September 17 the Soviets, in accordance with the Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement, marched into eastern Poland and soon after also into the Baltic States. All three — Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania — were forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union in July and August 1940.

On September 29, Stalin and Hitler effected a "fourth partition" of Poland. Hitler's share was 72 866 square miles with 22 140 000 souls, Soviet Russia's 77 620 square miles with a population 13 199 000.

National Socialism had posed as a defender of Europe against aggressive bolshevism. Now, by virtue of the Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement, the Soviets were able to make their first move westward.

The Western front had remained so quiet during the Polish campaign that one talked about a "phony war". This encouraged Hitler to believe that he might obtain peace while still keeping his Polish conquests. An "offer" to that effect, which he made on October 6, 1939, was left without reply. Victims as they were of their own propaganda (which is



always a danger with totalitarianism) the Nazis did not realize that, after what had happened, no democratic government could have attempted to conclude peace with a regime such as theirs without being swept away by its own people.

The German resistance movement, in its origins reaching to the very beginnings of the National Socialist regime when all overt opposition was at once ruthlessly suppressed, was now faced with a new task. By preparing to set up a democratic shadow government that would be trusted abroad, it must create the prerequisites for an early peace. In this, the German resistance found the support of the political refugees abroad who endeavoured to awaken a wider understanding for the basic difference between the National Socialist regime and the German people. They urged the western governments to pledge to the German people a decent and equitable peace, as soon as the Hitler regime would be overthrown from within. Unfortunately those endeavours abroad remained largely unsuccessful.

The history of the second world war is usually divided into several periods, namely, the initial period of German (and Japanese) successes from September 3, 1939 (or December 7, 1941 respectively) until 1942. The turning point was reached by the battle for Stalingrad from October 1942 to February 2, 1943 (in the Pacific the longdrawn battle for Guadalcanal, August 7, 1942 — February 8, 1943. This was followed by the period of the German (and Japanese) reverses, ending with the German capitulation on May 7 and 8, 1945 (Japan on September 2, 1945).

The German invasion of Denmark and Norway started April 9, 1940. On May 10, the "phony war" at the western front ended abruptly when neutral Belgium and Holland were invaded. Within a few days German troops had penetrated into France, this time carrying out the main ideas of the "Schlieffen plan" which had been neglected in 1914. In a powerful encircling movement, supported by the air force and mobile tank units, the right wing broke through to the Channel ports, outflanking the Maginot Line, a highly fortified defence system which France had relied upon as impregnable. Paris was taken without a fight on June 14. Three days later, Marshal Henri-Philippe Pétain, the victor of Verdun of world war one fame, replaced Paul Reynaud as French prime minister. Shortly afterwards, by a vote of parliament unanimous except for one dissenting monarchist voice, he became the Chief of State.

The armistice, signed on June 22, divided France into an occupied zone and the "French State", with the government taking its seat in



Vichy. On June 24 an armistice was concluded also between France and Italy, which had joined the war on June 10. Although France was by that time on the verge of collapse, the Fascist forces had not been able to make much headway.

The undersecretary of war in Premier Reynaud's cabinet Brigadier General Charles de Gaulle, objected in vain to the Franco-German armistice. He escaped to London, from where, on June 23, he issued the dramatic appeal to his nation to carry on the fight. The Free French movement, which he organized, has done much for the eventual restoration of French sovereignty.

Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, who resigned on May 10, the day war started in earnest, was succeeded by Winston Churchill, a persistent opponent to the appeasement policies. On September 3, 1939 Churchill had been appointed first lord of the admiralty, the same office he had held from 1911 to 1915. After Belgium's capitulation, the British expeditionary force was evacuated from the beaches of Dunkirk by the Royal Navy, supported by innumerable small private craft from England, under cover of the Royal Air Force. 335 000 men were saved by this operation, but most of their heavy equipment was lost. It was Churchill's tenacity as well as his brilliant eloquence that did much to save England during those dark hours. The struggle for air supremacy called the Battle of Britain, in which the German Luftwaffe engaged in the months following Dunkirk, was finally won by the Royal Air Force.

In the first world war a victory over France would have decided the war, in the second one it was only a tactical success. Even if, after Dunkirk, England had been invaded, the British Government would have continued to fight from the Dominions with the support of the British Navy until, as Churchill put it in his historic speech in the House of Commons, "in God's good time the New World will step forth to the rescue of the Old".

It was clear from the beginning that the United States, inspite of the existence of anti-war sentiments, would not idly stand by to watch the destruction of British sea power, let alone the British Empire. As early as September 2, 1940 the "Bases for Destroyers" deal was made between Great Britain and the United States. In exchange for bases in Newfoundland, Bermuda, the Bahamas and other British possessions, fifty American destroyers were transferred to Britain to help fight off German naval and air attacks.

During the presidential elections of November 5, 1940, both candi-



dates, Franklin D. Roosevelt, running for his third term, and his Republican opponent Wendell L. Willkie, pledged with equal conviction full support for the Allies against Hitler.

In March 1941 the "Lend-Lease" act was passed by Congress which gave power to the President to assist those nations whose defence he considered vital for the security of the United States. Eventually, when war time operations ceased on August 1, 1945, the sum total for Lend-Lease had reached 48.5 billion dollars.

In September 1941 Congress passed the Selective Training and Service Act. 16.4 million men had registered by October 16.

Mussolini's invasion of Greece on October 28, 1940 met with heroic resistance, which could only be overcome when powerful German forces were thrown in. Athens was not occupied till April 27, 1941. Also Yugoslavia, while defeated in the end in the spring campaign of 1941, put up a vigorous fight which upset Hitler's time table. Neither in Greece nor in Yugoslavia was the resistance of the people ever broken.

On June 22, 1941 Hitler declared war against the Soviet Union. Now Germany was once again engaged in a war on two fronts. After resounding victories (Kiev and Poltava, September 19; Orel, Bryansk, Vyasma, Odessa, Tanagerog and Kharkov, October 8 to 24) the attack bogged down west of Moscow.

When Japan, attacking the United States Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbor started the war on December 7, 1941, Hitler followed suit on December 11, declaring war on America. Thereby he himself sealed the East-West alliance that was to spell his doom.

At the eastern front the tide was turned by the battle of Stalingrad, which began in October 1942 and ended on February 12, 1943, with the capitulation of the last 90 000 German soldiers, remnants of twenty two divisions. From then on, the entire eastern front began to reel back.

Allied landings in Morocco and Algiers, November 7 and 8, 1942, and in Sicily on May 20, 1943, opened up new theatres of war. Western superiority in the air and on the seas, supported by the tremendous American industrial potential began to take effect. These superior forces also defeated General Erwin Rommel's Africa Corps. Of all the campaigns of the second world war the one in Africa was on both sides the most chivalrous. On May 13, 1943 the remnants of the Africa Corps, 252 000 men, capitulated at Cape Bon. The African campaign is estimated to have cost the Axis powers almost a million men, killed or captured, eight thousand planes, and 2.4 million tons of shipping.



On July 25, 1943, after twenty one years of dictatorship, Benito Mussolini was overthrown. His successor, Marshal Pietro Badoglio, concluded a separate armistice with the Allies on September 8. Two days later Rome was occupied by German troops. On June 4, 1944 the city fell to the American Fifth Army. The brilliantly executed invasion of Normandy ushered in the last phase of the war on June 6, 1944. In another amphibious operation, on June 15, the Allies effected a landing in southern France between Marseilles and Nice. On August 25, General Charles de Gaulle entered Paris.

By that time Allied air superiority was undisputed. Mass raids reduced many of Germany's cities to shambles, millions became homeless. Priceless monuments of art, cathedrals, palaces and other buildings, the pride of centuries, were lost in the process.

With the end of the war in sight, one question became paramount: What was to happen afterwards?

Soviet intentions were by then quite clear. Everywhere, the advancing Red Army acted not merely as a military occupation but as an instrument of enforced sovietization. This became manifest as soon as the Soviet armies reentered Poland. A Soviet sponsored "Union of Polish Patriots in the Soviet Union", soon to be recognized as the Polish government, the so-called "Lublin Committee" was established as early as 1943. Within three years after the war the following countries, occupied by the Red Army had been sovietized: Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, the Baltic States, and finally in 1948, Czechoslovakia.

What, however, were the intentions of the Western Powers? Their initial programme contained in the Atlantic Charter, which was agreed upon by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill on August 14, 1941, promised a just peace with equal economic opportunities for all. Excluding all territorial or other aggrandizements on the part of the victorious powers it prohibited territorial changes not in accord with the wishes of the populations concerned.

The Atlantic Charter became part of the Declaration of the United Nations of January 1, 1942. The Soviet Union, together with twenty seven other governments, soon followed by nineteen more, was among the first to affix its signature to it.

The psychological impact which the Atlantic Charter had exercised among the German people was neutralized again by the demand for "unconditional surrender" put forth by Roosevelt and Churchill, at the Conference of Casablanca, from January 14 to 24, 1943. This demand worked into the hands of Goebbels, whose propaganda machine



could now tell the German people that there was no choice for them but to fight to the end.

For the German opponents of National Socialism the Casablanca formula was a hard blow. Yet, compelled by their ethical convictions, they continued their efforts to overthrow the Hitler regime. The dramatic climac was reached on July 20, 1944, with the attempt on Hitler's life by Colonel Count Claus von Stauffenberg and his friends. By removing Hitler, the resistance movement hoped to make possible a trustworthy government that could obtain peace.

The attempt failed. Hitler's and Himmler's blood tribunals, the Gestapo, and the SS firing squads immediately went to work. Many of the victims were slowly tortured to death. Among the two hundred more prominent leaders butchered or forced into suicide were the former mayor of Leipzig Dr. Carl Friedrich Goerdeler, the designated chief of the post-Hitler government; the field marshals von Witzleben and von Kluge; General Erwin Rommel, hero of the African campaign; Colonel General Ludwig Beck and five other generals; the Socialists Theodor Haubach, Wilhelm Leuschner, and Dr. Julius Leber; the former ambassadors Ulrich von Hassell and Count Friedrich Werner von der Schulenburg; two brothers Stauffenberg; Count Helmut von Moltke, a great-grandnephew of the marshal; and Count Peter York von Wartenburg. The slaughter continued into the last weeks of the war, the collapsing Nazi regime apparently intending to wipe out all of its known enemies first. Catholic priests and Protestant ministers, Socialist workers, noblemen, professors, high government officials, students, officers and soldiers, men and women of all social classes and all walks of life, a representative cross-section of the German people became victims of this last Nazi blood orgy — more than fifty thousand altogether.

Although the immediate purpose of this revolt against Hitler was not achieved, no sacrifice brought for freedom and justice, the highest human ideals, is ever in vain. The action of the men of the 20th of July shortened the war by many months, and it proved to the world the existence and strength of the German resistance movement.

After this, no chance was left in Germany for forming a responsible government against Hitler from within. Thus, the end of the regime could come only after the last corner of Germany had been occupied by the Allies. By the end of hostilities, British troops had advanced as far as Western Mecklenburg on the Baltic Sea, while the central German provinces of Saxony and Thuringia were in American hands. These important territories were, however, turned over to the Soviets on July 1,



1945, by virtue of a Stalin-Roosevelt-Churchill agreement reached at the Conference of Yalta, from February 4 to 11, 1945. All German provinces east of a line following the course of the Oder and Neisse rivers (East Prussia, Silesia, Posen, West Prussia, parts of Brandenburg and Pomerania, in all 44 016 square miles) had been assigned to Soviet Russian and Polish administration at that Conference. The Western powers even consented to a forcible expulsion of the German population of about ten million by the Soviets.

Yalta confirmed in essence the agreements reached at the Conference of Teheran (Stalin, Roosevelt, Churchill) from November 28 to December 1, 1943, as well as the inter-Allied agreements of September 12 and November 14, 1944 about the partition of post-war Germany into Allied zones of occupation. The territory of "Greater Berlin" was spared out of the proposed Soviet zone and given a special Three Power Status, turned into a Four Power Status after the accession of France to the agreements. Western rights of free access to Berlin deriving from Germany's surrender were explicitly guaranteed by the Soviets.

At the second conference of Quebec (Roosevelt, Churchill) from September 10 to 16, 1944, which also dealt with the future division of Germany, it was agreed that the actual conquest of Berlin was to be left to the Soviets. This fateful conference also adopted a plan named after Henry J. Morgenthau Jr., then United States secretary of the treasury, which provided for an almost total destruction of German industry and the transformation of rump Germany into a "pastoral state". According to the estimate of Cordell Hull, then secretary of state, in a report to Roosevelt, the Morgenthau plan, if carried out, would have caused forty percent of the German people to perish. The reduction of Germany to a pastoral state could not be achieved, Ex-President Herbert Hoover stated in his report to President Harry S. Truman on March 18, 1947, "unless we exterminate or move twenty five million people out of it". Also men like Henry L. Stimson, secretary of war, John Foster Dulles, and others raised a warning voice.

While such extreme projects were ultimately not carried out their very existence greatly limited the freedom of action of the Western powers. By preventing the acceptance, in good time, of a rational policy for post-war Europe, the Morgenthau plan played into the hands of the Soviets, who on their part knew precisely what they wanted. The Kremlin found its task greatly facilitated by President Roosevelt's pro-Soviet advisers, among them Harry Hopkins, Henry D. White, and Alger Hiss, who asserted that the Soviets, once freed of their fear and



distrust towards their Western Allies would give up their program of world revolution and cooperate loyally towards a "peoples' peace".

Thus the second world war ended without producing the foundations for a new and more stable order. The borders of Europe were rolled back by one thousand miles and a thousand years, new hatred, new oppression, and another totalitarian regime threatening the peace of the world were left behind.

## XXIV

### THE REBIRTH OF GERMAN DEMOCRACY

On May 7 and 8, 1945, at Reims and in Berlin, identical instruments of surrender were signed by Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, Chief of the High Command of the German Wehrmacht, Colonel General Alfred Jodl, Chief of Staff, Colonel General Stumpff, and General Admiral von Friedeburg.

"We, the undersigned, acting by the authority of the German High Command, hereby surrender unconditionally to the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, and simultaneously to the Supreme High Command of the Red Army, all forces on land, at sea and in the air we are at this date under German control."

In East Prussia, in Curland, on the Atlantic coast, and wherever German units were still fighting, hostilities came to an end.

The German state as a subject of international law did not thereby cease to exist. The capitulation of May 7 and 8 was a military, not a political act of surrender. A German government, headed by Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz whom Hitler, shortly before his suicide on April 30, had named as his successor, continued to function also after that date. One of its first actions was to dissolve the National Socialist party. The Dönitz government was permitted by the Allies to operate in a small enclave, Mürwick, near Flensburg in Holstein. Only on May 23, 1945 was this provisional government disbanded by the Allies, Dönitz and the members of his cabinet were taken into custody.

By a Four Power Declaration of June 5, 1945, the United Kingdom, the United States, France, and the Soviet Union assumed "all the powers possessed by the German government, the High Command, and any state, municipal or local government or authority". It was explicitly added



that the assumption "of the said authority and powers does not effect an annexation of Germany".

Also, the division of Germany into four zones was effected "for the purposes of occupation", not as a measure of permanent partition. The territory to which the Declaration applied geographically was defined as "Germany within her frontiers as they were on December 31, 1937", i. e. those laid down by the Treaty of Versailles, before Hitler started his conquests. On December 31, 1937 the provinces east of the Oder and Neisse rivers were, of course, German.

The first post-war conference of the Allies convened in Potsdam on July 17, and it lasted till August 2, 1945. It was attended by Harry S. Truman, president since Roosevelt's death on April 12; Joseph Stalin; and Winston Churchill, who, however, was replaced by Clement R. Attlee, prime minister of the new Labour government, on July 28.

The Potsdam Conference, too, considered Germany as a unit, it made provisions for matters concerning "Germany as a whole" and ordered specifically that the country must be treated as an "economic unit". The Potsdam Protocol of August 2 signed by the three heads of government, referred to the Four Power Declaration and stated that in virtue of the supreme authority which it had assumed, "the Control Council has been established, and supreme authority in matters affecting Germany as a whole have been conferred upon the Control Council".

In their respective zones of occupation the Soviet, American, British, and French commanders-in-chief were vested with full powers. In consequence, the Soviet zone was developing very soon in a way essentially different from those of the Western Powers.

For the time being, no central German government was to be set up beside the Control Council. However, "certain essential central German administrative departments, headed by state secretaries, shall be established, particularly in the fields of finance, transport, communications, foreign trade and industry". This important provision of the Potsdam Declaration has not been implemented.

The Allied Control Council convened for the first time on July 30, 1945. It exercised supreme legislative, executive, and judiciary authority, at least nominally, until March 20, 1948, when the Soviets walked out for good.

Neither in the West nor in the East were the German borders of December 31, 1937 respected.

In the West, French policy with regard to the Saar territory inhabited by one million people, disturbed Franco-German relations for several



years. The French military authorities, aided by German separatists, detached this territory from Germany immediately after the war, incorporating it into the French economic and financial system. A "European Statute", however, which was to perpetuate this separation from Germany was rejected by the Saar population on October 23, 1955, with a majority of 68 percent.

The problem was solved amicably when the Saar was returned to Germany politically on January 1, 1957, economically on July 5, 1959. Ever since, that area, once an obstacle to Franco-German understanding, has become a link between the two nations.

Some German border districts which had been transferred by French and British military government decrees on April 23, 1949 to Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxemburg for temporary administration have meanwhile been returned to Germany by bilateral treaties. Border rectifications on a minor scale were arranged by mutual agreement. The last territories which had been under Dutch administration were returned to Germany on August 1, 1963.

After the end of the war the German island of Helgoland, off the north German coast, was made a target for bombing practice by the Royal Air Force. The population, about two thousand five hundred souls, was evacuated to the mainland. Applying Gandhi's principles of non-violence and civil disobedience, a group of Germans and Americans (the author of this book among them) from Christmas 1950 to the first week of January 1951 effected a "peaceful occupation" of the island. The success of this "Action Helgoland" demonstrated that among free peoples moral persuasion may be more powerful than political or military force. On February 19, 1951 Britain consented to return the island to Germany, the official transfer was effected on March 1, 1952. Although once devastated by millions of tons of high explosives, Helgoland has meanwhile been fully rebuilt, and it is now, like the Saar, a link between two nations.

In the West, therefore, the frontiers as they were on December 31, 1937 have everywhere been restored. In the East, the situation is fundamentally different.

Soviet Russian and Polish occupation of the German provinces east of the Oder and Neisse rivers is still continuing, the entire population has been expelled.

According to the inter-Allied agreements and the Yalta decisions, American, British, French troops moved into West Berlin on July 1, 1945. On July 11, the Inter-Allied Governing Authority, or Komman-



datura, was established for the three Western and the Soviet sectors of the city. It functioned till July 16, 1948, when the Soviet representatives withdrew from it. Legally it is still in existence to this day.

East Berlin with 1.055 million people, in gross violation of the Four Power status, was cut off from West Berlin's 2.2 millions by "The Wall" erected by the Communists on August 13, 1961. Barbed wire fences, a belt of no man's land, forcibly evacuated houses with boarded up windows, watch towers manned by Communist police (the so-called "Vopo") — these are the visible and tangible signs of the frontier between free and Soviet occupied Berlin.

Total German losses due to the war and its aftermath are estimated at six million killed, among them over three million civilians — victims of air raids and expellees who perished from violence or exposure during their trek westward. The air attack on Dresden alone, on February 13, 1945, caused the death of 250 000 persons according to estimates by the American State Department. The number of German citizens killed by the Nazis for political, religious, or "racial" reasons is estimated at three hundred thousand, one hundred and seventy thousand of them were Jewish.

On the territory of the three western zones, the American, British, and French, 2.3 million homes were totally destroyed or uninhabitable. In Berlin, 32 percent of all living space was in ruins, 316 000 houses in West Berlin, 190 000 in East Berlin.

German currency had practically lost any value, while cigarettes were assuming the functions of a stable "ersatz" currency. One pack of American cigarettes sold for 100 Marks, a pound of coffee for 400. Only rationed food was still available at pre-war prices, but there was very little of it. During certain periods per capita calories dropped as low as 800 to 1000 a day, i. e. below the level of "concentration camp rations".

Into the ruined cities and a starving country there poured ten million expellees in 1945/46, penniless, in rags, exhausted by famine and disease.

To pass from the British into the American or French zones — or vice versa — was at first almost as difficult as it is today to enter the Soviet zone of occupation. Special permits were required, and there were rigid Allied inspections at all the check points.

Even within the zones traveling was a problem. Trains for the German population were hopelessly overcrowded, the cars were often with-



out windows, lights, or any other conveniences. Every letter, every telegram was censored by Allied authorities.

The Americans initiated the unification of their zone on October 17, 1945, with the creation of the *Länderrat* in Stuttgart, an advisory council representing the German states Bavaria, Hesse, Baden-Württemberg, and Bremen. By Military Government decree a Parliamentary Council was added on March 1, 1947, consisting of twenty four members elected by the state parliaments.

The British, for their zone, created the Zonal Advisory Council in Hamburg on February 15, 1946. Its members, initially appointed by Military Government, were since June 10, 1947 nominated by the state parliaments.

On January 1, 1947 the British and the American zones were merged economically. An Economic Council for this new entity, called "Bizonia", established in Frankfurt on May 29, 1947, was the first nucleus for a future German government. Bizonia was widened to "Trizonia" in March 1949 when the French agreed to add their zone of occupation also.

Political parties which had been banned in Germany but for the National Socialists since July 1933, were restored in the American zone in August 1945, in the British zone in October, and in the French zone of occupation in December of that year. Within an amazingly short time these parties unfolded a lively activity, proving thereby that National Socialism had been able to suppress but not to destroy German democracy.

The main parties in post-war Germany are the Christian-Democratic party (CDU), the Social Democratic party (SPD), and the liberal, or Free Democratic party (FDP). For several years there also were a conservative party called German party (DP), as well as various smaller groups, most important among them the party of the expellees (BHE).

Right radical agitators have remained singularly unsuccessful. Especially the young voters proved immune to anything reminiscent of National Socialism.

A small but vociferous right radical party advancing neo-Nazi ideas, the so-called "Socialist Reich party", was declared anti-constitutional by the Federal Constitutional Court on October 23, 1952 and dissolved.

The Communist party (KPD) lost votes from election to election. At the Bundestag elections of September 1953 it dropped to 2.2 percent. On August 17, 1956 that party, too, was ruled anti-constitutional by the Federal Constitutional Court. In West Berlin, however, the KPD con-



tinues to function, amply supplied with funds from across the Iron Curtain. At the last elections for the city-parliament on February 17, 1963, the Communists polled only 1.3 percent of the votes.

The first free elections were held in the American zone in January 1946, in the communes of Bavaria, Hesse, Baden-Württemberg and, somewhat later, in Bremen, those in the British and French zones in September of that year. At quick intervals, elections followed in the counties, cities, provinces in all three Western zones topped by elections to the *Landtage*, or state diets. Although all of the elected bodies remained at first under the directive control of Allied military government, here was an important step forward towards the eventual restoration of German sovereignty.

American policy, at first influenced by the harsh philosophy of the Morgenthau plan, took a marked change following the significant Stuttgart speech by Secretary of State James F. Byrnes on September 6, 1946. His key note was that the German people should be permitted to find their way back into the family of free nations as a partner with equal rights and obligations. He also reaffirmed Germany's claim to her eastern provinces. Another landmark was reached when George C. Marshall, successor to Byrnes as Secretary of State, included Western Germany as a recipient of economic aid under the Marshall plan on July 5, 1947.

Marshall plan aid provided German economy, worn out as it was by the war, with an initial impulse so vital for reconstruction. On June 20, 1948 a currency reform was introduced by the Allied Military Governments in the Western zones and in the Western sectors of Berlin. In the course of the years the new German Mark, backed by confidence in the working capacity of the German people, has become one of the hardest currencies in the world.

On February 25, 1947 Prussia was "dissolved" by a decree of the Allied Control Council. In justifying this act, the Allies repeated some of the reproaches attached to the Prussian name by the propaganda machines of two world wars: that here there had always been a hotbed of reaction, militarism and aggression. The important part Prussia had played in the development of selfadministration, constitutional government, and social progress ever since the days of Frederick the Great and Freiherr vom Stein was ignored.

With the Prussian state dissolved, the Soviets created several new Länder, or states, on its territory: Saxony-Anhalt, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg, and Thuringia. Actually these never enjoyed any rights of auton-



my. Since 1952 they even ceased to be *Länder* in name and became administrative districts subject to the centralized dictatorship.

An ordinance issued on June 10, 1945 by the Soviet military administration permitted the functioning of "antifascist parties", "free" trade unions, and organisations to "safeguard the interests and rights of the working population". The so-called "bourgeois" parties were soon reduced to a shadow existence. The Social Democratic party with its great prestige among the working class was forcibly merged with the Communist party on April 21, 1946. The product of that merger, the so-called Socialist Unity party (SED), is entirely under Communist control. In Western Germany and the Western sectors of Berlin the SPD, under the leadership of Dr. Kurt Schumacher, a man of high merits for the cause of German and European freedom, rejected any union with the Communists with a majority of 82 percent.

On October 20, 1946 elections were held for the city parliament in Greater Berlin, i. e. in all four sectors. The pressure of Soviet propaganda was intense. Yet, even in the Soviet sector the Social Democrats emerged as the strongest party, by far surpassing the SED. Out of 130 seats in parliament the SED won only 26, while the Social Democrats obtained 63, the Christian Democrats 29, the Liberals 12 — a majority of 104 in favour of the democratic parties. When the city parliament elected Professor Ernst Reuter, a Social Democrat as mayor of Berlin, the Soviets prevented him by force from taking office.

These remained the only free elections ever held in Greater Berlin after the war. Dissatisfied with the results, the Soviets prohibited any repeat performance in their sector. Also outside Berlin, in the Soviet zone of occupation, there have never been free general elections based on universal suffrage. The National Socialist one-party system was continued under a different name.

West Berlin is an island city surrounded by Soviet held territory — the only democratic community behind the Iron Curtain. As in all big cities, the majority of the population consists of workers (proletarians, according to communist terminology), of craftsmen, employees, middle class people. This is precisely the class that Communism pretends to represent. That a population such as this should persistently reject communism, is registered all over the world.

To eliminate free Berlin has been one of the primary aims of Soviet policy from the beginning. On June 24, 1948 the Soviet military administration imposed a blockade upon Berlin, in order to starve the



population into surrender. The city was cut off from all its Western accesses. Only the air lanes were kept open.

This blockade was broken by the tremendous American, British, French air lift which successfully undertook to supply a city of over two million not only with food and goods, but with coal and raw materials for its industries as well. Equally important was the determined resistance and morale of the West Berliners who preferred hunger, cold, privations of any kind to surrendering to communism. After eleven months the Soviets admitted failure by giving up the blockade on May 12, 1949. The Four Power status of the city was reconfirmed by a Four Power agreement in New York on May 4, 1949, and by the four powers' Foreign Ministers Conference in Paris from May 23 to June 20, 1949.

During their common struggle for the common ideal of freedom, the families of American, British, and French officers and soldiers shared all the hardships endured by the Berliners. Both victors and vanquished learned to respect each other, and this brought about a fundamental change in their human relationship. They became allies and friends, as partners for the same cause.

Thus the blockade of Berlin marks the turning point in post-war German history. In this new atmosphere the groundwork was laid for the new democratic German State.

## XXV

### THE GERMAN FEDERAL REPUBLIC

The Federal Republic of Germany was established on the territory of the three western zones of occupation. With its area of 95 930 square miles including West Berlin, it comprises about 52.2 percent of the German Reich within the frontiers as they were on December 31, 1937. Of the 57.2 million people (65 percent of the German population in 1937) living on its territory in 1963, about nine million are expellees, while four million are political refugees from all walks of life who escaped from Soviet-occupied Germany. Almost half of these refugees were young people below the age of twenty five.

Although the Federal Republic was organised only in 1949, and, at present, exercises jurisdiction only over part of Germany; it is neither new, nor a separate German State. Legally, it is the continuation of the



German Reich which, as mentioned above, did not become extinct by the military capitulation of 1945. This Federal Republic is the democratic spokesman for the entire German nation, and it is recognized as such by all the governments of the free world.

The Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany, ratified by the elected diets of the German states entered into force on May 23, 1949. It was worked out by the Parliamentary Council, an assembly composed of sixty five members elected by the state diets and established in Bonn on September 1, 1948. Five additional members, with a consultative voice, came from West Berlin. The Parliamentary Council elected as its president Dr. Konrad Adenauer, the chairman of the CDU and former mayor of the city of Cologne.

The black-red-gold colours, once the first of the democratic national emblems to be suppressed by Hitler, were reinstated. Having been part of German history since time immemorial, these colours stood for the quest for German unity, for justice and freedom in 1525, in 1848, and again in 1919, and to take them up again as the national emblem was an expression of the continuity of history and the identity of the Federal Republic with the German Reich.

The first general elections in the Federal Republic, with universal suffrage for all men and women over twenty years of age, were held on August 14, 1949. The Christian Democrats emerged as the strongest party (139 seats), followed by the Social Democrats with 131. The Free Democrats won 52, the Communist party 50 seats. The conservative German Party and the Bavarian Party, the latter no longer in existence, advocating stronger Bavarian autonomy, won 17 seats each. A few minor parties, all of which have disappeared since, also were represented in the *Bundestag*, or federal parliament.

The SPD was led by Dr. Kurt Schumacher. After his untimely death on August 20, 1952, Erich Ollenhauer (d. Dec. 14, 1963) became chairman, since May 1962 with Willy Brandt, the Mayor of Berlin, as his deputy.

This newly elected *Bundestag* convened in Bonn on September 7, 1949. On the same day the *Bundesrat* was constituted, an upper house representing the *Laender* (comparable to the United States Senate). There were eleven states in 1949, three of which united in 1952 by referendum, forming the *Land* Baden-Württemberg, also called the South-west State. On January 1, 1957, the Saar territory acquired the status of another state of the federation. According to Article 23, of the Basic Law, Greater Berlin, too, is a federal state. Certain provisions were made, however, to safeguard Berlin's four power status — federal laws



require a special act by the Berlin legislature to enter into force there, Berlin deputies to the *Bundestag* have a consultative voice only and so forth. *Bundestag* and *Bundesrat* met in joint session on September 12, 1949, enlarged by an equal number of members elected by the state diets. This gremium, called *Bundesversammlung*, or Federal Assembly, elected Theodor Heuss, a liberal (d. Dec. 12, 1963), as the first Bundes-president (Federal President), reelecting him on July 17, 1954 in Berlin for a second five year term. In 1959, he was succeeded by Dr. Heinrich Lübke, former member of the Center party and a deputy in the Prussian state diet since 1931. As an upright opponent to totalitarianism, he had suffered persecution under the National Socialist regime.

Parliament on the motion of the Federal President elected Dr. Konrad Adenauer as *Bundeskanzler*, or Federal Chancellor, on September 15, 1949. For fourteen years till October 1963, he remained head of each of the federal governments, with changing coalitions. His successor, Professor Ludwig Erhard had served as minister of economics in all Adenauer cabinets since 1949.

Warned by dire experiences at the time of the Weimar Republic when left and right radicals joined forces to vote down any democratic government, the Basic Law introduced a novel provision — the so-called "constructive vote of non-confidence". While as in all states with a parliamentary constitution the chancellor requires the confidence of the majority of the *Bundestag*, he cannot be removed from office by a purely negative vote of non-confidence but only by a majority agreed on a successor.

While there was many a bitter fight between the opposition and the government parties, of which the CDU was always the strongest, all political parties with the exception of the Communists (who already in the second *Bundestag* elected on September 6, 1953, failed to obtain a single seat) were from the beginning agreed on certain fundamental principles. In internal policy, the democratic order must be defended against all its foes; social progress must continue, and economic and financial stability must be maintained. In foreign policy, all parties alike are pledged to close European integration and international reconciliation. This includes atonement and restitution for the wrongs inflicted by the National Socialists upon their Jewish and non-Jewish victims.

Also in matter of military defence there exists today agreement in principle between all parties.

The moral and political integration of Germany into the community of nations; reconstruction of the ruined cities (about seven million new



homes were built after the war); the resettlement of millions of refugees and expellees; and all the measures for social and economic recovery in trade and industry — all this would not have been possible without cooperation between the two major parties, Christian and Social Democrats. The spiritual as well as material reconstruction also required the joint efforts of labour and management, of consumers and producers, in fact of all strata of the population, urban and rural, expellees and Western Germans alike.

The index of industrial production, down to 41 percent in 1947 (from 100 in 1936) went up steadily until it reached 320 percent in 1963. The black-red-golden flag is seen on all the Seven Seas, Lufthansa planes are linking all continents, there are over ninety nations with whom the Federal Republic maintains diplomatic relations today.

West Berlin, a field of devastation in 1945 where reconstruction could not really begin until after the end of the blockade in 1949, has again become the greatest, most important industrial city of Germany, with a yearly turnover of ten billion marks. The Free University, the Technical University, the Conservatory of Music, academies and schools of higher learning of all kind are attracting students from many nations. There are no slums for "proletarian" quarters in reconstructed West Berlin. Under the reign of democracy, the "de-proletarianization of the proletariat" has practically been achieved. Hundreds of thousands of new homes, modern, hygienic, economical, were built and are inhabited by free citizens. New parks were laid out, churches, public buildings, modern hotels have risen. Theatrical and musical life is flourishing, again up to international standards.

It is significant that, even though West Berlin, the "island city" is constantly exposed to the full blast of Communist propaganda, the Communist party, as mentioned above, polled only 1.3 percent in the West Berlin elections of February 17, 1963.

There is a total change of scenery as soon as one crosses into Soviet controlled East Berlin. Although these are the same people, with the same character and qualities as those on the Western side of the Wall, their part of the city is entirely different because they are forced to live under a totalitarian dictatorship. So many years after the war they are still left, inspite of hard work, without many of the basic commodities and amenities of life; there are still slums and ruins; life is drab and depressing — a devastating judgment on Communism, even as an economic system. Above all, people in the Soviet area are longing for freedom.



It has become customary, in view of the striking pace of reconstruction in the Federal Republic and West Berlin, to speak about an "economic miracle". However, of greater significance for Germany than economic recovery was a deep reaching change in the sphere of the spirit. When at the lowest point of postwar development all political and economic power had vanished in Germany, the forces of the mind, spiritual and moral, emerged as the only true reality. The people, particularly the young, remembered again the universal traditions in German history. Not by returning to outlived forms of nationalism but by serving the community of nations could Germany henceforth make her contribution to the progress of mankind and find thereby her own happiness.

A similar development took place among the youth of many other countries. Before the politicians were even discussing Europe, young Frenchmen, Germans, Englishmen were crossing the borders to meet each other halfway on their common path toward European union.

It was the spirit of human brotherhood, compassionate and unselfish, which in those dark years came to the rescue of the suffering German people. Generous aid from overseas helped to overcome destitution and despair. More important almost than the food; every gift-parcel carried, intangible yet real, a human, brotherly message. That this material and moral aid came in large part from total strangers made it even more precious.

All this is not forgotten in present day Germany. It is an additional reason why it is considered a moral obligation to assist the less developed countries. Since 1950, the Federal Republic has spent from public and private sources over twenty billion Marks for foreign aid.

Also the German language and German culture have regained their standing. In 1963, a hundred and forty German cultural institutes and reading halls, and a hundred and thirty three German schools with 52 000 students were operating abroad. Many hundreds of German courses are being taught all over the world. German musicians and artists, German scientists and German books and publications are again at home in many foreign countries. At the German universities 22 000 foreign students are enrolled, the majority of them from African and Asian nations — ten percent of the entire student body.

Since October 7, 1949 the Soviet zone of occupation — with seventeen million inhabitants — is calling itself "German Democratic Republic". This presumptuous name, however, does not change the fact that the regime is completely dependent on Moscow, neither German, nor



democratic, nor a republic. It is a Soviet satellite; it is run by SED functionaries who were never elected or confirmed by the people; it is not a republic but a despotic regime. The mass flight of four million people, prevented to express their opinion in any other form, has been a continuous plebiscite against the Communist regime over the years.

Also after the communist Wall was erected in Berlin on August 13, 1963 people have been trying to escape to the free West every day. Some succeeded, others were killed by the communist police, again others were left bleeding to death in the barbed wire meshes on the eastern approaches to the Wall.

In the Soviet occupied zone, as everywhere behind the Iron Curtain which for one thousand miles is cutting through the heart of Germany, life in all its aspects, cultural, religious, political, social, economic is under totalitarian control. Five communist tank and infantry divisions, uniformed police, armed communist "factory brigades", in addition to twenty Soviet Russian divisions equipped with six thousand tanks, are backing up the SED regime. There is also, of course, an all-powerful secret state police created after the pattern of the National Socialist Gestapo and the Soviet GPU.

Without the intervention of Soviet tanks the people in East Berlin and throughout the Soviet zone would have overthrown these despotic rulers already by their revolt on June 17, 1953. This uprising started among the workers of East Berlin, then it spread to three hundred fifty towns — an unarmed people driven to despair by its oppressors.

Although the revolt was crushed, something did happen on that 17th of June which cannot be undone again by tanks or guns. For the first time the technicians of the revolution of terror were confronted with a revolution of freedom. The revolts in Poland, the revolution in Hungary of October/November 1956, all have their initial roots in the German uprising of June 17, 1953.

A threefold mandate has devolved on the Federal Republic: As trustee of the whole of the German nation, it must keep alive the hope of the oppressed for their eventual deliverance; as a democratic nation, it must contribute to the well-being and progress of the community of the free; and it must protect its own freedom, in order to be able to fulfill these various tasks.

While the Marshall plan provided initial aid for European reconstruction, the Schuman plan was the first step towards economic union in Europe. On May 9, 1950 the French foreign minister Robert Schuman



proposed his plan for the integration of coal, iron, steel, and scrap iron in a single market, and on April 18, 1951 a treaty was signed to that effect in Paris by France, Germany, Italy, Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg — the latter three already joined together in the Benelux customs union. This treaty, nucleus of the European Economic Community (EEC), or Common Market, as it is usually called, entered into force on July 25, 1952. With this, a reconciliation between France and Germany was also initiated. When Robert Schumann died in September 1963 he was hailed as one of the chief architects of this historic event as well as of new Europe of today.

The Common Market treaties, signed by the six nations on March 25, 1957 in Rome became operative on January 1, 1958. The Six together have a population of 170 million people. Greece with 8.5 million became an associate member on November 1, 1962, Turkey with 29.5 million on September 12, 1963. Sweden, Switzerland and Austria applied for associate, Ireland, Cyprus, Spain, Norway, and Denmark for full membership. However, the setback suffered when in February 1963 negotiations in Brussels about Great Britain's joining the Common Market were suspended will have to be overcome before some of the nations will feel able to join.

During the few years of its operation EEC has already proved its importance by impressive achievements. The index figure for the gross national product of the Six went up from 130 in 1958 to an estimated 160 in 1963; industrial production increased by 40 percent from 1958 to 1962 (in the USA 30 percent, in the USSR 23 percent); trade between the member states by 73 percent.

However, no exclusive "European Club" is intended by the Six. Nineteen African states have joined the Common Market as associate members for five years. A new agreement with them was signed on July 20, 1963. Trade has been greatly increased not only inside the Common Market but also with the outside world, imports by 27, exports by 28 percent from 1958 to 1962. Finally, an Atlantic partnership is envisaged with the United States, and this is a goal for which the Federal Republic is earnestly working. So comprehensive a community would go a long way in raising the standard of living not only of its own members but of others as well, especially by aiding the developing nations to put their economies on a broader basis.

What has become alive in the European Community is not merely a matter of economic expediency but a renewed consciousness of a common origin, a common heritage, and a common goal. The work of



Briand, Chamberlain and Stresemann, after having been dormant for so many years, is now bearing fruit. This is shown particularly by the new relationship between France and Germany who for centuries had been regarded as "hereditary enemies". When Chancellor Konrad Adenauer visited France from July 2 to 8, 1962 he was received as the representative of a nation of friends, and President Charles de Gaulle's return visit, September 4 to 9, 1962 was an impressive manifestation of Franco-German unity. The workers of the Ruhr district, the people of Hamburg, Munich, Bonn turned out by the hundreds of thousands, even millions, to express their friendship for the French nation.

The Franco-German treaty signed by President de Gaulle and Chancellor Adenauer in the *Elisée* palace in Paris on January 22, 1963, in force since the exchange of the documents of ratification on July 2, 1963, has sealed this reconciliation. It is a treaty in accordance with all the wider international obligations of both Germany and France. That Franco-German friendship is not understood as exclusive but as strengthening a vital link within the Atlantic community was made obvious by the overwhelming reception which the United States President John F. Kennedy received in Germany, especially Berlin, during his visit from June 23 to 26, 1963.

The ever present threat to the liberty of West Berlin, particularly Nikita Khrushchev's Berlin ultimatum of November 27, 1958 by which he attempted to force the Western Powers out of the city, has drawn the two major German parties, CDU and SPD, more closely together also in matters of military defence. At its party congress in Bad Godesberg on November 15, 1959, the Social Democratic party endorsed the government defence policy within the supranational framework of the existent treaties.

The forcible sovietization of Czechoslovakia in February and March 1948, following that of so many other countries in Eastern Europe, prompted Britain, France, and the Benelux countries to agree to a defensive pact in Brussels, March 17, 1948. This measure became more fully effective when it was supported by the United States, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Portugal, and Italy. On April 4, 1949 the twelve nations concluded a defensive alliance in Washington, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). In 1952 Greece and Turkey also joined.

In order to prepare Germany's accession, a European Defense Community (EDC) with a proposed integrated army of forty three battle units (divisions), twelve of them German, was first envisaged. The laws



required for this were passed by the *Bundestag* with a two thirds majority on March 30, 1954, but the French National Assembly removed the project unceremoniously from its agenda on August 30 of that year. A precarious situation was thereby created. Fortunately, due to the initiative of Sir Anthony Eden (Lord Avon), then British foreign secretary, the dangerous gap was quickly filled. The Federal Republic became a member of NATO and of the Western Union (an enlarged Brussels pact) by the Paris Treaties of October 23, 1954.

These treaties entered into force on May 5, 1955. On that day the Federal Republic was recognized as a fully sovereign state (the only one on German soil), the legitimate spokesman for all Germans, also those in the Soviet zone and East Berlin. The occupation regime in Western Germany ended, a new phase of German history began.

To implement German defence obligations within NATO, the necessary laws providing for volunteers, then for general conscription were passed in quick succession. Provision was also made for conscientious objectors who, however, did not exceed 0.6 percent of the draftees. With a quiet and sober sense of duty, without jingoism, German youth accepted their obligation to help defend freedom and to protect international peace against the Soviet threat. In 1963, German armed forces (called *Bundeswehr*) reached 420 000. The ultimate goal lies by 520 000 for all service branches, including territorial defence against communist infiltration and sabotage in case of war.

All of the twelve divisions of the *Bundeswehr*, without exception, are placed under NATO command. Along the Iron Curtain, from the Baltic Sea southward to the point where the German-Austrian-Czechoslovak borders meet, these German forces are today the strongest single defence contribution within the Atlantic community. Also the new German Air Force, equipped with the supersonic F 104—G Starfighters, and the German Navy are approaching completion. Every combat-ready squadron and naval unit are at once placed under NATO command.

The close integration of the allied forces is significant beyond the purely military aspect. Germans, Frenchmen, Belgians, Englishmen, young soldiers from all NATO nations are today working and living together in the same spirit, under the same supranational command, for the same goal and ideals. What began as a military alliance has developed into a human community of European-Atlantic dimensions.

The effectiveness of this alliance is shown by the fact that, since it was formed, not one single further village was lost to Soviet power. Behind the protective shield of NATO the free nations of Europe were



able to build up their economy and to dedicate their efforts to peaceful progress.

Despite all these successes, the German people still finds itself in a tragic situation. Reunification is still far off. All the international conferences dealing with this matter have remained unsuccessful — the Berlin Conference from January 25 to February 28, 1954 as much as the two Conferences of Geneva, July 17 to 23, and October 26 to November 16, 1955. Neither did the fact that Germany agreed to resume diplomatic relations with Moscow in 1955 bring any change for the better.

Reunification could be realized any day by democratic means, namely, general elections east and west of the Iron Curtain, perhaps under United Nations auspices. The day may come when the Soviet leaders, reputed for their realism, will understand that to prevent the German people from exercising the right of national selfdetermination, which today can no longer be denied to any nation, works to the disadvantage of the Russian people itself.

A book on German history cannot be brought to a close without making reference again to Austria where so much of German history found its origin. Austria, like Germany, was occupied by the four Powers after the war. But, fortunately, her Soviet-occupied zone was not cut off from the rest of the country, there has always been but one Austrian government. On December 31, 1955 the last foreign soldier left the country. Since then Austria has resumed an honoured place in international life, and she is once again a major center of world civilization. Austro-German relations are most friendly, the last shadows that remained from the years of National Socialism were removed when Germany's Federal President Heinrich Lübke visited Vienna in March 1962.

It may be part of the planning of history that the nations of the Occident, by common dangers, are ever again reminded of their common origin and heritage. From the very beginning German history has always been closely intertwined with the fate of all of Europe. In our time, after so many trials and tragic errors, this indissoluble union has become once more the foundation for all international endeavours. Divided as yet by the Iron Curtain, but one in her quest for freedom and national unity Germany is prepared to take up again the supranational tasks entrusted to her by two thousand years of European history.



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